



Minutes - General Meeting November 25th, 2021

Quinn's Steakhouse & Irish Bar, 96 Richmond St. W. Toronto @ The Sheraton Centre

Attending Members

Collette, Brett Walker, GM & Int. Ops
Collette, Ron Lonsdale, VP
Denure Tours, Ray Denure, Owner
GOWAY, Peter Lacy, CFO
HolaSun, Juan Carlos Garcia, President
HolaSun, Scott Green, Controller
Okushu Tours, Lisa Lau, MD
Sunwing, Joanne Dhue Director, C&C
Transat, Nicole Bursey, Commercial Director
Transat, Howard Liebman, Senior Director
TTC, Jeff Element, CEO

TTC, Nick Roberti, Group BDM
West Jet Vacations, Dave Cecco, Dir. Product

Attending Supporting Members

Canadian North, Elena Ramirez, Sales

Attending Guests

Butterfield, Andrew Said, Director Finance
TICO, Richard Smart, CEO
TICO, Tracey McKiernan, Legal Counsel
Antje Spletstoesser

Introduction & Advocacy – Brett Walker

Brett Walker (Chair) thanked everyone present and all members for their support this year.

Special thanks was extended to Mike O'Connor, VP & GM @ Quinn's for providing the venue and the hors d'oeuvres complimentary.

Members note: This past year and the pandemic necessitated frugality as concerns this end-of-year meeting. However, in keeping with CATO's commitment to progress, it's expected this was the last such meeting in a pub or restaurant.

The Chair noted, in his view, the greatest milestone over the past year was the *Economic Impact Assessment* published in June 2021 and followed up with another micro-survey and resulting data to support CATO's advocacy efforts in the wake of the election call.

This data was not only used in CATO's own advocacy efforts but also provided to our advocacy partners the **Hardest Hit Coalition** and the **Canadian Travel & Tourism Roundtable**. The Chair noted the goals of these groups were often different from each other but all supported the industry's recovery efforts. CATO and the Hardest Hit Coalition have historically focused more on government support such as CEWS and CERR, whereas the Canadian Travel & Tourism Roundtable focused predominantly on border reopening as well as both mitigating and streamlining testing requirements.

The Chair thanked all members for their support of the surveys and emphasized once again that 100% of committed members participated in both surveys. Furthermore, ATOQ and its members had both contributed to both surveys and the costs.

Howard Liebman was introduced. He spoke of the importance of CATO and ATOQ working together, both in the past and the future; there being much more work to be done. Apart from the two prominent issues of financial support and testing, Howard mentioned the constraints placed on both consumers and the industry based on current federal requirements for unvaccinated children. Apart from having to complete pre-entry as well as arrival and Day-8 tests, unvaccinated children must also quarantine for 14 days after arrival in Canada, which prohibits, among many other things, attending school, camp or



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daycare. Despite the current vaccine for children 5-12, it will take months to vaccinate willing families. This will have a major impact on winter and in particular March break travel, bearing in mind booking trends.

The Chair noted CATO has contributed \$2,260 (including HST) toward the efforts of the Hardest Hit Coalition based on the HHC's recommended tiers of <\$2m operating budget = \$2k and >\$2m operating budget = \$5k.

The Chair thanked all CATO members for their support of these initiatives. The culmination of all these efforts was the tabling on November 24th of Bill C-2, An Act to provide further support in response to COVID-19 in the House of Commons which includes the Tourism and Hospitality Recovery Program (THRP).

While the Bill isn't perfect, the Chair noted he is pleased the Liberal Government has followed through on its commitments. However, as there is opposition to the Bill, he stressed the importance of CATO and as well as individual members to pressure all parties and all sides of the debate to insure the Bill receives Royal Assent without delay.

To qualify, eligible businesses must have an average monthly revenue reduction of at least 40% over the first 13 qualifying periods for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (12-month revenue decline) AND a current-month revenue loss of at least 40% over relevant reference periods.

With Mélanie Joly taking on Foreign Affairs, the tourism portfolio is now with The Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance.

Subsequent to CATO meeting, the Coalition of the Hardest Hit businesses sent an email to stakeholders with some suggested text for any further expressions of support and advocacy. See below:

Thank you @JustinTrudeau, @cafreeland, and @R_Boissonnault and all Members of Parliament for standing behind Canada's tourism, hotel, and event businesses in their ridings and in the House.
#HardestHit

Merci @JustinTrudeau, @cafreeland, et @R_Boissonnault et député-e-s pour le soutien aux entreprises locales du tourisme, hôtels et événementiel. #PlusDurementTouchées

The Coalition of #HardestHit Businesses applauds the government for their commitment to protecting tourism, hotels, and events businesses and the 2 million+ workers our sectors employ.

La Coalition des #PlusDurementTouchées applaudit le gouvernement pour son engagement à protéger le tourisme, les hôtels, l'industrie de l'événementiel et les +2 millions de travailleurs de nos secteurs.

TICO fees – Brett Walker / Richard Smart

Richard Smart and Tracey McKiernan attended the meeting on behalf of TICO. The Chair thanked them for attending in-person. Richard noted his receipt of CATO's letter of concern dated September 30th,



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2021. He stated TICO is committed to greater consumer protection which could take many forms. While the funding of the fund is not being considered as part of the current fee review, it is an ongoing concern with both TICO and government.

He noted the importance of CATO's input and that of other stakeholders during the recent consultations. While there is no decision yet on the any fee increases, by law TICO must provide registrants a minimum of 90 days notice prior to any change of fees. He also noted registrants currently benefit from a fee waiver for annual registration renewal fees and Travel Industry Compensation Fund payments owed to TICO between April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

Regarding CATO's concern of funding the fund, Richard stated TICO is considering all feedback and remains committed to engaging with the Ministry of Government & Consumer Services on a future funding model consistent with our consumer protection mandate, while recognizing the impacts of a prolonged travel recovery.

The Chair thanked Richard. In closing, the Chair noted an email received from Ted Scaldwell, Director, Caucus Relations for Minister MacLeod, indicating CATO's letter sent to TICO and cc'd to both Minister MacLeod and Minister Romano was given to Brook Timpson, Director of Stakeholder Relations for Minister MacLeod. The same source also confirmed that as of November 29th, 2021, the Director of Policy for the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture will be moving over to the office of Minister Romano, Minister of Government Services.

Rebranding

The Chair introduced the important work currently being done on CATO's rebranding and website. He stated in the past CATO has been viewed much like a private club. That has changed and will continue to change as the executive is committed to opening up CATO and reducing barriers to entry.

The Chair highlighted the six principles or pillars driving this change - inclusion, access, equity as well as being progressive, representative and embracing a collective spirit. One very important illustration of CATO's change is the executive's alignment consistent with the makeup of our membership and our industry. The Economic Impact Analysis confirmed 73% of tour operators' workforce were women. With this year's appointments of Stéphanie Bishop as Vice Chair and Joanne Dhue as CATO's appointed TICO Director, the executive now represents this fact.

Rounding out the CATO executive team is Brett Walker, Chair; Richard Edwards, Treasurer and Nicole Bursey, CATO appointed TICO Director.

NEW CATO Website & Community Hub

The Chair introduced Antje Splettstoesser and Nick Roberti. Both Antje and Nick volunteered to undertake the development of a new website and community hub, leveraging CATO's rebranding and new logo.



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Antje spoke to the importance of CATO's rebranding consistent with its six principles. She highlighted the urgent need of a new website in light of all the advocacy CATO has been doing and the need to enhance our image.

She ran through the procurement process and the company (Geek Power) chosen to build the website and hub consistent with these principles and rebranding. Foundational content for the website is being curated by the team as well as through the services of a content writer.

Nick spoke of the importance of the community forums for generating ideas and sharing information based on members' insights, questions or concerns. Apart from the content of the forums, these forums will allow members to communicate one-to-many and not simply one-to-one as is the case with many traditional streams of communication. The forums will allow members to communicate on issues in real-time and not simply wait for the next meeting or otherwise opportunity.

Antje concluded by stating the expected launch of the website will be the middle of February.

The Chair thanked Antje and Nick for volunteering all their time and efforts on part of this project for members and others.

Reduction of fees and deferred payment

The Chair noted that in its effort to strive toward being more inclusive, as well as recognizing the financial impacts of the pandemic on all members, CATO's executive has simplified its fee structure. There will now only be two tiers of membership instead of six. The membership fee for tour operators > 10 million in gross Canada sales is now \$800. The membership fee for tour operators with < 10 million in gross Canada sales will be \$2,000. It's hoped this new fee structure will encourage even more tour operators to join.

To further accommodate existing and prospective members during this difficult time, CATO has also deferred any payment of fees for the 2022 membership year until July 1, 2022.

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