

Minutes Thursday March 3rd, 2022 @ 4PM EST

Attendees

Confirmed Members

ACV, Lucy Sabella, VP Operations
Collette, Brett Walker, GM & Int. Ops
Collette, Ron Lonsdale, VP
Denure Tours, Ray Denure, Owner
G Adventures, David Green, VP Commercial
Globus Family of B. Stéphanie Bishop, MD
GOWAY, Peter Lacy, CFO
HIS Canada H. Inc, Tony Saunders, CFO
HolaSun, Juan Carlos Garcia, President
Okushu Tours, Lisa Lau, MD
Sunwing, Andrew Dawson, COO
Sunwing, Joanne Dhue Director, C&C
Transat, Nicole Bursey, Commercial Director
Transat, Howard Liebman, Senior Director
TTC, Jeff Element, CEO

WestJet Vacations, Dave Cecco, Dir. of Product
Westworld Tours, Leanne Haus, GM

Confirmed Supporting Members

Canada North, Elena Ramirez
DCI, Pamela Laite
Discover The World, Barbara Dirnberger
Discover The World, Jane Clemento
ENIT, Salvatore Basile
GMS, Laura Nesteanu
Visit Britain, Lynda Falcone

Alliances & Partners

ATOQ, Nathalie, Guay, Directrice générale

The Chair acknowledged the continued commitment and efforts of CATO Executives: Stéphanie Bishop (Vice Chair), Richard Edwards (Treasurer), Nicole Bursey (TICO Director – CATO appointed) and Joanne Dhue (TICO Director – CATO appointed)

TICO Bulletin (released Marc 1st, 2022) – Members were quickly briefed on the technical points namely; the temporarily exemption of registrants (with fiscal year-end dates until November 30, 2024) from filing Annual Financial Statements for two additional years and extending registrants' ability to issue travel vouchers until March 31, 2023 (in lieu of a refund or comparable alternate travel services acceptable to the customer if a supplier fails to provide the travel services on or after March 30, 2020 and that failure is related to COVID-19).

These changes are all pursuant to Travel Industry Act, 2002, Ontario Regulation 26/05, sec. 46. (1). For full details [click here](#).

The Chair announced that one of CATO's appointed director seats on TICO is up for renewal as of the TICO AGM in June. The seat is currently held by Nicole Bursey. TICO has expressed their wish for Nicole to continue. The Chair proposed Nicole continue in CATO's director for another term and was approved.

Hardest Hit Coalition – 2022 Budget Recommendations (attached)

The Chair referenced the HHC Pre-budget 2022 submission the CATO Executive has both and approved funding for. CATO's most recent contributed \$2,500 plus HST in January 2022. CATO had previously contributed \$2,000 plus HST in 2021.

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The salient points for CATO members is the petition to reverse the 50% wind down (which begins this month with Period 27 March 13 – April 9) and to extend the program through September 2022 (currently set to expire May 7, 2022).

The Chair indicated many HHC members believe some changes are possible. There is some enabling provision(s) within the current legislation. However, HHC's Co-Chairs have stated it's not likely any changes at all will come without the hundreds of HHC members and tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of their own members raising their voices in unison.

Peter Lacy asked whether there was any particular timing associated with a grassroots campaign. The Chair stated there was not. Individual members can write to Members of Cabinet, MPs or others. To be both effective and make the biggest impact, it's best if the messaging is aligned with the four points of the HHC's pre-budget recommendations.

ETOA – The Chair stated Tim Fairhurst, Secretary General of ETOA had reached out regarding what he believes is a need for a universal digital covid certification well into the future. Tim believes the EU DCC (whose framework currently includes 62 countries -27 EU and 35 Non-EU) will most likely become the “global reference standard”. Currently the non-EU nations that endorse the EU DCC are: Jordan, Benin, Montenegro, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay, Verde, Lebanon, UAE, Salvador, Singapore, Togo, Georgia, Moldova, New Zealand, Serbia, UK, Armenia, Israel, Faroe Islands, Morocco, Panama, Albania, Monaco, Andorra, North Macedonia, Ukraine, Turkey, Vatican State, Marino, Switzerland.

While no one wants the requirement to present health credentials to continue any longer than necessary, it's likely we'll go down this road again at some point in the future. He believes when this happens the EU's scheme will become the reference standard others adopt.

The Chair asked members what their thoughts were on this issue. Members believed notionally the idea made sense but that CATO should take a wait and see approach as there are many more pressing issues.

For more information on the EU DCC [click here](#)

NOTE: A similar concern was highlighted at the CT&TR meeting this week. Beyond the immediate needs of science based requests for elimination of pre-departure and arrival testing, roundtable members were asked if there's any concern what might happen if government saw the need to restore travel restrictions in the event of a health emergency or variant of concern in the future? Rhandi Rahamim the CT&TR Co-Chair asked members if this is an active risk to be concerned with. For example, should the CT&TR advocate that government re-commission an expert health panel or some other body to determine what might trigger any relapse and corresponding measures. Many members stated that, while in principle it makes sense to engage government on the matter, most believed that neither was this the right time, nor would this government be receptive to any collaboration; demonstrated by the government's unwillingness to provide a clear recovery plan or timelines for the easing of restrictions.

The Chair mentioned he has joined representatives from ETOA and USTOA at meetings on the reform of German VAT rules. Germany seems intent to require non-EU entities to register for VAT, and to collect VAT on the retail price of holidays in Germany sold to consumers anywhere in the

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world. This edict has thankfully been suspended for a second time, not least due to pressure from regional governments and industry groups but is widely expected to be implemented from 1st January 2023.

The Chair advised it would be best if a tax professional could represent CATO at these meetings. The implications for CATO members selling German products and packages appears to be significant.

CATO website – The Chair provided a sneak-peak of the framework and ongoing build-out of the CATO website. Volunteers, along with the executive team have been working with Geek Power to create a truly dynamic website; complete with member forums, community pages, library and abundance of networking tools. The website will also feature much more robust, as well as appealing, public facing pages. The site is expected to be available to members in early April and live soon afterwards.



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A photograph of four hikers on a mountain peak, high-fiving each other. They are wearing backpacks and are looking towards the camera with smiles. The background shows a vast, hazy mountain range under a clear sky.

Welcome to CATO

We represent the interests and advocate on behalf of Canadian Tour operators!

The Canadian Association of Tour Operators (CATO) is a non-profit organization, consisting of highly respected tour operators from across Canada as well as supporting members.

CATO's primary role is to inform government and other stakeholders of issues important to its members as well as advocate on their behalf.

[Learn More](#)