MINUTES
Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee

Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 19, 2026
12:00pm – 2:00pm
Visit SLO CAL Office – 81 Higuera Street, Suite 220, San Luis Obispo, CA

1. CALL TO ORDER: 12:05pm

PRESENT: Hemant Patel, Aaron Graves, Toni LeGras-Price, Hamish Marshall, Amar Sohi
ABSENT: Mark Eads, Clint Pearce, Lisa Belsanti
STAFF PRESENT: Cathy Cartier, Annie Braunschweig, Emily Rudge, Molly Cano

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2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cartier shared a reminder of the Annual Bash and announced the date of the SLO CAL Summit.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of January 8, 2026 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
4. Approval of January 2026 Visit SLO CAL Financials
5. Approval of February 2026 Visit SLO CAL Financials

Committee Discussion – None.

ACTION: Moved by **Patel/Graves** to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion: 5:0

CEO REPORT

6. Visit SLO CAL CEO Report

Cartier shared the January and February STR report; January reflected a strong increase in San Simeon due to HWY 1 reopening, and February reported strong numbers in both San Simeon and Cambria, as well as SLO and Pismo. Cartier announced the Family Friendly Workplace recognition which was given for the second consecutive year by the SLO Chamber. Cartier shared an update from the Cal Poly EIM Advisory Council and highlighted their upcoming 7-year strategic plan, a new mentor program, and the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences is celebrating its 125th anniversary on November 13-14. Cartier shared a recap of the EIM Auction which was held on February 21 and announced that Cal Poly exceeded their fundraising goal, raising over $140,000. Cartier shared that the Cal Poly Breakawave event is now seeking a new location, with tentative dates held for September 25th weekend, and VSC is assisting to connect them with the Port of Avila to possibly hold the event there. Cartier shared a recap of Visit California's Outlook Forum and noted that the recruitment search for Caroline Beteta's replacement will likely be announced in June; Cartier congratulated Solterra on their Poppy Award win for best PR campaign for the launch of FOSO at Sensorio. Cartier highlighted

the ongoing conversations with the City of Paso Robles and the City of SLO with Waymo to continue to research what it could look like to be "Waymo Ready" and shared that there is an opportunity for the cities to meet with Waymo in Sacramento in April. Cartier highlighted the discussion of what it might look like to be considered Waymo Ready as a mid-size city in a non-metro area. Cartier shared the invitation she received by WTTC to attend a CEO leadership cruise in Egypt in May; Cartier noted she won't be attending but it speaks volumes to be invited, as SLO CAL is a smaller destination. Cartier shared a recap of the CalTravel Board Meeting and Retreat, noting that most destinations are forecasting flat to down budgets for FY 27; World Cup bookings are strong in West Hollywood and San Jose but there is a 120-day ability to cancel reservations. Cartier highlighted the CalTravel retreat priorities, which included an exclusive tour of the SFO runway. Cartier shared U.S. Travel Association updates highlighting that they are working to help support payment of TSA workers and air traffic controllers, and the U.S. was the only country to lose international visitation in 2025; U.S. Travel Association is also working to prevent the proposed 5-year review of social media accounts. Cartier noted that the U.S. Travel Association projects $30.5B in economic impact is under threat due to geopolitical issues despite the upcoming World Cup, which provided significant economic impact gains in the 1994 World Cup. Cartier shared updates from SBP including flight schedule changes for Alaska, American and United. Cartier shared her upcoming travel schedule.

Committee Discussion- Sohi commented on Outlook Forum noting that the messaging was helpful to hear that stakeholders and investors should continue to advertise internationally despite international travel being volatile.

Business Items

7. VP of Communications and Marketing Search Update

Cartier announced the completion of the VP of Communications and Marketing Search, with Ashlee Akers of Verdin being hired with the start date of June 1, 2026.

Committee Discussion. Graves, Marshall and Sohi congratulated VSC on the exciting news and stated it is a big win for the organization.

8. Investment Portfolio Update

Braunschweig shared a quarterly update for the investment portfolio, highlighting moderate year-to-date performance. She also shared a breakdown of asset allocation, reflecting alignment with the VSC investment policy.

Committee Discussion- None.

9. Executive Committee and Board Seats

Cartier shared a reminder of the current slate of Executive Committee Seats which will be further discussed at the April EC meeting, with the Board Seat applications opening April 1, and shared a reminder of the current vacant seats, to be finalized at the May 28 EC meeting.

Committee Discussion- None.

10. Marketing, Travel Trade & ESC 2050 Updates

Cano shared the paid media highlights of the new Turns Well Taken brand campaign and Premium CTV placements on Hulu/Disney/Netflix, and she shared one of the brand campaign videos. Cano highlighted an update of the Tapped into SLO CAL partnership with Firestone Walker, noting that it will include 5 episodes and 4 million impressions. Cano shared the .30 ad spot of the Tapped into SLO CAL campaign. Cano also shared a

trailer video of the HWY 1 documentary film which Visit California is creating and are aiming to be released around Memorial Day weekend. Cano shared a World Cup video “Extra Time” which highlights California travel and Pensara is creating with Visit California. Cano provided updates from the sales team which included a Hotel Beds campaign recap, shared a new program in partnership with Visit California called GetYourGuide. Cano shared an update on the IPW planning process. Cano highlighted the UK trade incentive program which ran from January 1 – March 28, with 8 tour operators included to win a FAM in September. Cano shared the custom HWY 1 cookies created in partnership with Visit California to celebrate the reopening of HWY 1 and were distributed to UK tour operators. Cano shared an update on the paid media campaign partnership with See Monterey surrounding the reopening of HWY 1. Cano noted recent and upcoming sales team FAMs. Cartier highlighted earned media wins including Sunset Magazine, Fodors and Travel + Leisure, and TIME Magazine. Cartier highlighted the recent UK influencer visit with Ben Ebbrell. Cartier highlighted owned media metrics. Cartier shared ESC 2050 and Advocacy Updates including an update on the L.A. hotel minimum wage increase and the proposed L.A. hotel tax increase during the Olympics. Cartier shared updates on the Last Mile initiative which includes SLO Safe Ride’s impending new shuttle service, the City of SLO feasibility study, and VSC’s participation on the SLOCOG Steering Committee for its Regional Transportation Plan.

Committee Discussion- None.

Cartier highlighted upcoming meetings and important dates.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 1:26pm