

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

HORSE RACING BOARD

In the Matter of: )

)

Regular Meeting )

)

HILTON HOTEL

CENTECLA BALLROOM A

123 WEST HUNTINGTON DRIVE

ARCADIA, CALIFORNIA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2026

10:00 A.M.

Reported by:

Martha Nelson

APPEARANCES

BOARD MEMBERS

Gregory L. Ferraro, DVM, Chair

Oscar Gonzales, Vice Chair

Damascus Castellanos, Commissioner

Dennis Alfieri, Commissioner

Brenda Washington Davis, Commissioner

Peter Stern, Commissioner

STAFF

Scott Chaney, Executive Director

ALSO PRESENT

Richard Lewis

Mandy Staley, Tehama District Fairgrounds

Larry Swartzlander

Bill Nader, Thoroughbred Owners of California

John Sadler, California Thoroughbred Trainers

Alan Balch, California Thoroughbred Trainers

Josh Rubinstein, Del Mar Thoroughbred Club

Moira Kenny, Humboldt County Fair

Andy Titus, Humboldt County Fair

APPEARANCES

PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard Mandella

Samantha

Jamie

Jeanette

Klara

Lynn

Phoenix

Andy Mathis

Oscar de la Torre, Advocate/Backstretch Workers

Leonard Miranda, Integrity Thoroughbred Racing

Rozamund Barclay, Owner/Breeder

Sandra

Ellis Davis, Equibase

Terry Lovingier

## INDEX

PAGEAction Item:

- |    |  |          |
|----|--|----------|
| 1. | Discussion and action by the Board regarding the request by the Tehama District Fair for the Allocation of Race Dates for their Fair Race Meeting in 2026. | 15       |
| 2. | Discussion and action by the Board regarding the request by Humboldt County Fair for the Allocation of Race Dates for a Fair Race Meeting in 2026.         | 65       |
| 3. | Public Comment: Communications, reports, requests for future actions of the Board.   | 3<br>113 |
| 4. | Adjournment  | 115      |

1  
2 P R O C E E D I N G S

3 9:57 A.M.

4 THURSDAY, FERUARY 26, 2026

5 CHAIR FERRARO: Ladies and gentlemen, this is the  
6 meeting of the California Horse Racing Board. Please come  
7 to order. Please take your seats. This is the regular  
8 notice meeting of the California Horse Racing Board on  
9 Thursday, February 26th of 2026, at the Hilton Hotel in the  
10 Centella Ballroom A, at 123 West Huntington Drive,  
11 California.

12 Present at today's meeting are: myself, Dr.  
13 Gregory Ferraro, Chair; Oscar Gonzales, Vice Chair; Dennis  
14 Alfieri, Commissioner; Damascus Castellanos, Commissioner;  
15 Brenda Washington Davis, Commissioner; Peter Stern,  
16 Commissioner; and Scott Cheney, Executive Director.  
17 Commissioner Tom Hudnut is unable to attend this month.

18 Before I go on and read all this, you're quite  
19 familiar with it, we're going to take things a little out of  
20 order this morning. We're going to go with the public  
21 comment first, since people have conflicting schedules and  
22 I'd like to accommodate them, particularly Mr. Mandella who  
23 deserves a lot of accommodation.

24 So before we go to the business of the meeting, I  
25 need to make a few comments.

1           The Board invites public comment on matters  
2 appearing on the meeting agenda. Procedurally, the Board  
3 will first hear from those directly involved in the agenda  
4 item. I will then invite public comment on the agenda item.  
5 The Board will not answer questions, this is for comments  
6 only.

7           Unsolicited speakers are limited to two minutes.  
8 During all public comments, a tone will sound to indicate  
9 the speaker's time is up. The Board may ask questions of  
10 individuals who speak, which may extend their two minute  
11 time limit.

12           There are public comment sign-in sheets located at  
13 the designated table to my right for each agenda item on  
14 which the Board invites comments. There's also a sign-in  
15 sheet for those wishing to speak during the public comment  
16 period for matters not on the Board's agenda if it concerns  
17 horse racing in California. Please print your name legibly  
18 on all sign-in sheets.

19           When a matter is open for public comment and you  
20 come to the podium, introduce yourself by stating your name  
21 and organization. This is necessary for the court reporter  
22 to have a clear record of all those who speak. When your  
23 two minutes are up, I'll ask you to return to your seat so  
24 that others can be heard. I will insist that all speakers  
25 stay strictly on topic for each agenda item. If the speaker

1 strays off topic, I will move to the next speaker. If the  
2 speaker repeats themselves, I will ask if the speaker has  
3 any new comments to make. If there are none, the speaker  
4 will be asked to let others comment to the Board.

5 If anyone has comments of a more general nature  
6 that are not specific to the agenda items, those comments  
7 must wait until agenda item public comment. In order to  
8 allow as many of these to speak during that half hour, we'll  
9 strictly enforce a two-minute time limit.

10 And we'll begin, again, with the public comment  
11 period first.

12 And Mr. Mandella, I know you have a few things  
13 you'd like to say. Just go to the podium there and push the  
14 buttons.

15 MR. MANDELLA: Thank you. Well, first of all, I  
16 apologize, I didn't get dressed up. They lost my suit at  
17 the cleaners.

18 It's an unfortunate time and I hate to be the one  
19 to speak on this sensitive subject. But the idea of  
20 starting meetings up in Northern California, I'm concerned,  
21 would delete the purse money at Santa Anita and Del Mar and  
22 take away the horse population that we so desperately need.

23 You hate to think of any racetrack not running. But  
24 they're already closed up there and not running. And people  
25 have moved out of the state. And if Santa Anita doesn't

1 stay strong with its purses and horse population, people are  
2 already not sending horses here because of our problem.

3 So I think we need to do everything we can to keep  
4 Southern California as strong as possible.

5 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you, Dick. Thank you, Dick.

6 Now, anyone else like to speak during the public  
7 comment period? Do we have a sign in sheet here?

8 Samantha, Animal Alliance Network? Go ahead,  
9 Samantha.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: Just a --

11 CHAIR FERRARO: It's nice to have you here.

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: Pardon. Just a  
13 reminder to the audience, there will be public comment after  
14 numbers one and two. So if you want to speak specifically  
15 about Tehama date allocation and/or Humboldt County, you'll  
16 have that option as well. So this is item number three,  
17 general public comment.

18 CHAIR FERRARO: This is for items not on the  
19 agenda. Go ahead.

20 SAMANTHA: Good morning, Commissioners. I'm here  
21 to speak in defense of horses used and abused for horse  
22 racing. Horse racing is animal cruelty and does not give  
23 horses a natural life. As a matter of fact, their lives are  
24 shortened. The average lifespan of a horse in the wild is  
25 25 to 30 years. The average lifespan of a horse in horse

1 racing is three to five years. Three years old, getting  
2 killed.

3 Horse racing is a culture of violence. Horse  
4 racing is about feeding our society's gambling addiction.  
5 You're obviously not concerned about the horses that are  
6 involved in horse racing. You're only concerned about  
7 preserving abusive traditions in order to make money by  
8 taking away the freedom and autonomy of animals.

9 It is very important that -- apparent that this  
10 Board does not care about horses. You only care about what  
11 animals can do for you. You call it sport, but really it's  
12 about gambling and profit. Clearly, this Board is only  
13 interested in making money off the backs of innocent  
14 animals.

15 Again, I'm here to speak on behalf of the horses.  
16 I'm here to represent what the horses and animals want.  
17 I'm here to educate you on what animals want. They want  
18 freedom and bodily autonomy. They're not entertainment  
19 slaves.

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

22 Jamie?

23 JAMIE: California-bred Warm Springs was a stunning  
24 two year old sorrel filly whose so called career was a  
25 whopping five months long. With five starts and two first

1 place finishes, her future was bright, but not as it seems.

2 On October 24th, 2025, she is first to cross the  
3 wire in the prestigious Golden State Million Futurity Trial.  
4 In less than 20 seconds, this baby horse ran herself to  
5 death. Per the track announcer, "Warm Springs is being  
6 unsaddled and evidentially will not be appearing in the  
7 winner's circle." This was after being yanked by her bridle  
8 and the jockey whipping her repeatedly to get this photo up.

9 This poor animal was dying. Not a single person  
10 cared. Not a single person recognized the gravity of the  
11 situation. Warm Springs is listed as non-muscular skeletal  
12 sudden death on the California Horse Killing website. Two  
13 year old horses should not be suffering sudden death.

14 The same thing happened in 2025 when Favorite Doc  
15 was struck repeatedly to get to the Los Alamitos winner's  
16 circle, but he was dying. Even after he came to a complete  
17 stop, he was beaten. This was brought to your attention,  
18 and of course this Board did nothing to punish the jockey on  
19 the track.

20 Horse racing is dying. This industry is  
21 contracting. The public, they're tired of this abuse and  
22 the death of these magnificent animals. Your responsible  
23 thing to do would be to start rehoming and retiring the  
24 innocent horses that you claim to care so much about.

25 So please look at this photo of Warm Springs. She

1 was killed that day, two years old.

2 Thank you.

3 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

4 Jeanette?

5 JEANETTE: Hello and thank you for this  
6 opportunity to speak on behalf of the horses. Welcome back  
7 to Arcadia. It's been a very long time since you have been  
8 here.

9 Since this meeting is in the vicinity of Santa  
10 Anita, I would like to talk about one of their horses, Navy  
11 Jack. A thoroughbred bay gelding was foaled February 8th,  
12 2021, in Great Britain. He was raced four times overseas  
13 with one win. After a five month layoff, he finds himself  
14 in a new country. He was trafficked across the Atlantic  
15 Ocean, landing at San Luis Rey Downs for clocked workouts.  
16 In two out of three starts at Santa Anita, Navy Jack placed  
17 last. On his fourth start at Santa Anita, he did not  
18 finish. He clipped heels and fell, leaving the track by  
19 Equine Ambulance. The race was deleted since fallen horses  
20 is not a good look.

21 A month later, he resurfaces at Los Alamitos  
22 Thoroughbreds. California decided to give him one more  
23 chance. How generous. But in the eyes of this disgusting  
24 industry, Navy Jack couldn't cut it. He places second to  
25 last in both of his races at Los Alamitos Thoroughbreds.

1           This poor horse then finds himself in Emerald  
2 Downs, Washington State. He's entered to run in a bottom of  
3 the barrel, cheapo claiming race. This magnificent horse  
4 that was shipped in from Great Britain to run at highly  
5 esteemed Santa Anita is now running in \$5K claimers. At his  
6 one start at Emerald Downs, he placed third to last.

7           How many more races are left for Navy Jack before  
8 he finds himself in a feed lot or a kill pen like so many  
9 thousands of others? When you quote unquote, "love horses,"  
10 you do not subject them to what has been done to Navy Jack.

11           Thank you for your time.

12           CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

13           Klara?

14           KLARA: Hello. Thank you.

15           CHAIR FERRARO: Yeah, I got them both. I got them  
16 both.

17           KLARA: Regarding racing at Tehama, the CHRB has a  
18 documented history of failing to fully account of -- full  
19 account for racing fatalities, and the public has not  
20 forgotten.

21           Tap the Wire broke his ankle after winning in Los  
22 Alamitos. His death was confirmed by the track announcer,  
23 yet his name did not appear on the CHRB's official fatality  
24 list. One question. The explanation was that he was  
25 euthanized at a non-CHRB facility, and therefore his death

1 did not count. That loophole allowed a confirmed racing  
2 fatality to disappear from official record.

3           Only after this was exposed did the CHRB revise  
4 its rules to require reporting of deaths occurring within 72  
5 hours of leaving CHRB grounds. That rule change was an  
6 admission that prior system allowed fatalities to go  
7 uncounted.

8           Now, in the current meeting packet under Equine  
9 Emergency Services on page six, it explicitly states that no  
10 auxiliary sites will be used. This raises serious concern.  
11 If a horse suffers a catastrophic injury and is transported  
12 off site before euthanasia, what guarantees exist that the  
13 death will be fully reported and included in official  
14 statistics?

15           There is a clear and disturbing pattern in this  
16 industry. Mortally injured horses are removed from the  
17 track, away from spectators and cameras, often with a  
18 stabilization device placed on a shattered limb, loaded into  
19 a van, and euthanized elsewhere. Basically, let the human  
20 save some face while the horses suffer more. Even if they  
21 win, the horses always lose. When deaths occur off  
22 premises, conveniently, transparency is reduced and public  
23 scrutiny disappears.

24           The Tehama District Fair in Red Bluff is a remote  
25 venue. What independent oversight will be present? Who

1 will ensure that the 72-hour reporting rule is followed?  
2 Why should the public trust an honor system in an industry  
3 that has already demonstrated it will exploit technicalities  
4 to avoid accountability?

5 If a horse is fatally injured as a result of  
6 racing, that death must be counted regardless of where  
7 euthanasia occurs. Geography cannot be allowed to determine  
8 whether life is officially acknowledged.

9 Thank you.

10 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

11 Lynn?

12 LYNN: Good morning, and thank you for taking my  
13 comment.

14 First, the fire inspection reports in your packet  
15 have been from March 2025. This is nearly a year old. Fire  
16 clearance is not a historic document, it is a safety  
17 requirement. Approving live racing based on outdated  
18 inspections would be reckless and inconsistent with public  
19 safety standards.

20 Second, the Racing Association veterinarian  
21 position is not ceremonial. Under the Federal Horse Racing  
22 Integrity and Safety Authority, these veterinarians are  
23 central to enforcing safety rules, conducting race day  
24 exams, overseeing injury reporting, and ensuring regulatory  
25 compliance. Neither listed veterinarian appears to have

1 current documented experience overseeing thoroughbred race  
2 meets under HISA.

3 Dr. Clifton's background reflects over a decade of  
4 working with Standardbreds at Cal Expo in 2007, a harness  
5 racing venue that is materially different from regulated  
6 thoroughbred racing and not subjected to HISA in the same  
7 way. Her current profession will focus, by her own  
8 description, is hospice and palliative care for companion  
9 animals. While that is compassionate and valuable, it is  
10 not evidence of current hands-on experience in high-  
11 intensity thoroughbred race meet oversight under HISA's  
12 complex regulatory structure.

13 Dr. Samantha Burke appears to have no documented  
14 racetrack veterinarian experience in thoroughbred racing.  
15 Her background reflects general equine practice and  
16 community emergency education. Again, commendable, but this  
17 is not equivalent to serving as an association veterinarian  
18 responsible for race day sinus exams, regulatory compliance,  
19 injury reporting, and enforcement of HISA safety protocols.

20 These are not small details. They go directly to  
21 horse safety and regulatory integrity.

22 Third, your own packet cites Business and  
23 Professions Code 19482(b) bars the CHRB from licensing non-  
24 profits or anyone sharing the racing venue with them. I  
25 respectfully urge you not to approve this race application.

1 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

2 LYNN: Thank you.

3 CHAIR FERRARO: Phoenix?

4 PHOENIX: Today, I want to tell you about a horse  
5 named Legal Mousse. I seriously doubt that any of you care  
6 about who he is, but we do, and I'm going to share his  
7 story. Legal Mousse was a CA-bred bay gelding born in April  
8 2021. His first start was at Santa Anita at age four. He  
9 placed second to last, described as fractious. He had 10  
10 starts, never breaking his maiden. That's probably why he  
11 was dumped out of state into the Southwest racing circuit of  
12 hell. This poor horse was literally up for sale his entire  
13 life, a modern-day slave. Nine of his 10 starts were  
14 claiming races.

15 On January 20th, 2026, he was entered to run in a  
16 cheap claimer at Turf Paradise as the rail runner. As soon  
17 as the starting gate opened, he was in trouble. His hind  
18 legs gave out, buckling beneath him. He was eventually  
19 ambulated off the track. We all know what that means. The  
20 Arizona Department of Gaming has confirmed that Legal Mousse  
21 was euthanized due to either a pelvic or spinal injury.

22 This horse deserved kindness, respect, and  
23 freedom, just like all living beings, just like you and me.  
24 But when you are born into the horse racing industry, that  
25 will never happen, and it breaks my heart on a daily basis.

1 I'd like to use the rest of my time for a moment  
2 of silence to honor this magnificent gelding and all the  
3 innocent horses who have lost their precious lives in the  
4 horrific racing industry.

5 (Pause)

6 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you very much. Your time is  
7 up.

8 Andy Mathis, please, next.

9 MR. MATHIS: Well, thanks for being here. I'm not  
10 sure if I'm in the right group that just came up.

11 CHAIR FERRARO: There's no guilt by --

12 MR. MATHIS: I might have filled out the wrong  
13 page.

14 CHAIR FERRARO: There's no guilt by association.

15 MR. MATHIS: Sorry about that. You caught me off  
16 guard.

17 My name's Andy Mathis. I'm born and raised in  
18 Northern California. I've trained horses in the North for  
19 the last 25 years. I'm also a north member of the TOC.

20 As you know, racing at Pleasanton closed over a  
21 year ago. The trainers and owners were asked to come and  
22 support one circuit of racing in California. Many of these  
23 trainers have made significant sacrifices to be here.

24 If the purses are cut in Southern California, for  
25 these trainers to call their owners who have supported their

1 move here and tell them that they'll be running for less  
2 purse money would be devastating to our horse population.  
3 It would be unfair for all the people who have relocated to  
4 endure purse cuts at this point.

5           Also, Ferndale and the other track, I'm not sure  
6 what it is, but those have never been part of the core  
7 racing in Northern California. You know, this isn't  
8 reopening Golden Gate Fields for people who have relocated  
9 from the North to go back to where they were. These tracks  
10 most of the trainers never even ran at. You know, this was  
11 a different group of horses. Some of them came from other  
12 states. So for us to suffer at this point on purse cuts,  
13 you know, to support those particular tracks I think would  
14 be significantly unfair.

15           Thank you.

16           CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you, Andy.

17           Oscar de la Torre?

18           MR. DE LA TORRE: Good morning, members of the  
19 Board. My name is Oscar de la Torre. Thank you very much  
20 for the opportunity to speak on behalf of workers,  
21 especially backstretch workers who are the foundation of the  
22 horse racing industry.

23           When Golden Gate Fields was closed, horsemen and  
24 women and hundreds of backstretch workers were forced to  
25 move. Many of these workers and their families came here to

1 work in the Southern racing circuit. All of these workers  
2 are benefiting from a healthier racing circuit in Southern  
3 California. We saw what happened in Pleasanton and it was a  
4 lifeline that just didn't work out and we're concerned about  
5 that. And we should assess how -- we should assess those  
6 impacts.

7           These are challenging times for many working  
8 families. Inflation and affordability concerns weigh heavy  
9 on many workers and their families. There are consequences  
10 to allocating race dates and it is important to assess those  
11 consequences, especially as it relates to reducing purses  
12 and negatively impacting the fragile economic ecosystem that  
13 the Southern California racing circuit finds itself in.

14           Thank you and I hope that we can have a clear  
15 assessment of the impacts of the decisions that will happen  
16 today.

17           CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you, Oscar.

18           Okay, we're going to start at the beginning now,  
19 number one.

20           Scott, do you want to make some opening remarks,  
21 please?

22           EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: Sure. I can just kind  
23 of update the Board and the audience in terms of like how we  
24 got here.

25           As everybody probably recalls, there was a date

1 allocation in Northern California on the agenda last month.  
2 It included three fairs. It was the two that you see here  
3 today, as well as Alameda County Fair. But as you may or  
4 may not recall, there were some last-minute decisions and  
5 letters and changes that staff really didn't have  
6 appropriate time to evaluate. The Board voted unanimously  
7 to add an extra Board meeting to address these allocations  
8 alone and made it clear that you wanted staff to work with  
9 the three fairs in order to create a legal structure that  
10 you could consider for date allocation.

11 Two of those three fairs did request date  
12 allocation. Alameda County Fair did not. So that's why you  
13 have Tehama and Humboldt County.

14 My legal team in particular, Staff Counsel Lloyd,  
15 did a lot of work with the fairs and set some pretty strict  
16 timelines to really kind of pin them down on the exact  
17 structure, what the involvement of Bernal would be, and so  
18 on. The result of that back and forth is what you see in  
19 the staff analysis that was written by the legal staff for  
20 the CHRB as well. And that's how we ended up here today.

21 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay. Can we -- to start Tehama,  
22 I'd like to see -- hear from the inspector that inspected  
23 Tehama County Fairgrounds. Is he here?

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: I thought so, yeah.

25 CHAIR FERRARO: Here he comes.

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: For context, obviously  
2 Tehama County hasn't run races in over 40 years from what I  
3 understand. And after the last meeting, we thought it was  
4 probably a good idea to have CHRB personnel have a look at  
5 the track. So safety steward, and I won't give out your  
6 resume, but suffice it to say that Richard Lewis is a safety  
7 steward and steward here in California, but has a long  
8 history of track management and fairs and so on.  
9 Accompanying him was an investigator, as well, Jose Flores  
10 from Sacramento.

11 MR. LEWIS: Good afternoon. My name is Richard  
12 Lewis. I was assigned by the Board to go to Tehama County  
13 Fair to do a pre-meet safety check, very similar to what  
14 I've done in the last 12 years at all the fairs and a couple  
15 times at Golden Gate Fields.

16 The safety check, we have a form that we're  
17 supposed to follow that talks about rail heights and track  
18 surface and other facilities. And at the time, I could not  
19 use that form because there was no rail set up. The track  
20 was not worked. So what I did was wrote something I thought  
21 would give everyone an idea of what was happening up there.

22 I believe that Mandy is very serious about -- the  
23 fair manager -- about having a race meet. There's just a  
24 lot of obstacles to go through to get there. And I'd be  
25 able to -- be happy to answer anything on the questions that

1 the Board may have about any of the items I wrote about.

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: The track inspection  
3 report is in the Board packet. And just for context, the  
4 law requires that a track have a track inspection 90 days  
5 before -- within 90 days -- or 90 days, am I right about  
6 that? -- before licensure.

7 CHAIR FERRARO: Any questions from the Board?

8 So in your opinion, they're not close to being  
9 ready to go?

10 MR. LEWIS: At this time, there's a lot of  
11 obstacles, not only with the racetrack and racing surface,  
12 but the barn area. In order to take mutual wagers there,  
13 they have nothing set up for the mutual wagers. Photo  
14 finish has to figure out what they're going to do. There's  
15 no jockey's room, no paddock, no racing office. Even more  
16 important, a receiving barn, test barn is only talked about.  
17 There's no plans on how it's going to be erected and how the  
18 security of that barn is going to be.

19 CHAIR FERRARO: Tote board? Is there a tote  
20 board?

21 MR. LEWIS: Pardon me?

22 CHAIR FERRARO: Is there a tote board?

23 MR. LEWIS: No tote board. And there's a lot of -  
24 - there's actually a lot of work that needs to be done on  
25 the racetrack itself. Once a rail gets put up, we have to

1 find out what's within 10 feet of the face of that rail that  
2 needs padding. And there's an extreme amount of work to be  
3 done because they have a rodeo arena in the center field  
4 that the half-mile racetrack runs around. So a viewing  
5 stand for the stewards, I don't know where it can be put at  
6 or how it can be done. The railing itself and the padding  
7 is going to be a huge project.

8 CHAIR FERRARO: Cost?

9 MR. LEWIS: I don't have the money to make that.  
10 It's going to be a huge cost, yes. I mean, there's a lot of  
11 railing that has to be pulled up. There's existing railing  
12 that has to be padded. The outside fence is part of its  
13 cyclone chain link, but I've been told that they will put  
14 the shadow fencing in it, and I believe they will. But  
15 there's a lot of fencing down the backside that has to be  
16 changed because you're going three different fences, and  
17 that's going to be a disruption for the horses.

18 Presently, there's about 210 stalls available.  
19 Where they're going to put the portable stalls, nobody  
20 really knows. They say, well, we have the ability to get  
21 200 to 400 portable stalls, but there has to be a base for  
22 those stalls to be put in. And there was a place pointed  
23 out in the infield, but they have no way to get horses to  
24 the infield to the racetrack. There's no tunnel, so you  
25 can't have horses stabled on the infield.

1 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay. Are there any questions?

2 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yeah.

3 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Were you able to --

4 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: So --

5 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: -- were you able to explain  
6 a lot of these findings to the Tehama folks while you were  
7 there?

8 MR. LEWIS: During our walkthrough, Mandy walked  
9 through with me, and I pointed out some areas that needed to  
10 be looked at really seriously. And like a paddock, I asked  
11 her, well, what are you going to do about a paddock? Well,  
12 we have a couple ideas. But to me, an idea, if I saw a  
13 blueprint, this is where our paddock's going to be, it would  
14 be a lot easier to say, all right, this can be done. And  
15 then she got a copy of my report also.

16 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Because our additional  
17 staff report says that they are estimating, quote, "\$55,000  
18 to make all these repairs." That is impossible, it sounds  
19 like to me.

20 MR. LEWIS: In my opinion, it would cost \$55,000  
21 just to get the mutual department and the jockey's room up  
22 and running.

23 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Okay. Thank you.

24 CHAIR FERRARO: Go ahead.

25 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: So your report is dated

1 January 23rd. Are you planning to go back and see what  
2 progress they've made, if any?

3 MR. LEWIS: If the Board asks me to go back, I'll  
4 be in the car two hours later.

5 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Thank you.

6 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay. Thank you.

7 All right, Mandy and Mark, you want to plead your  
8 best case here?

9 MS. STALEY: Plead my best case.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: I do have to say,  
11 sorry for interrupting, but you guys have a gem with Mandy  
12 Staley at Tehama County Fair. She was super responsive,  
13 really easy to work with. I think there are massive  
14 logistical problems and legal ones as well. But we really  
15 appreciate your responsiveness to the lawyers' questions and  
16 keeping -- and I know the legal team really did as well.

17 MS. STALEY: Well, thank you. I appreciate that.

18 You know, Rome wasn't built in a day, and I know  
19 that this racetrack is going to take a little bit of time to  
20 get done. I just want you guys to see a fresh breath of  
21 air; right? You have somebody sitting in front of you that  
22 wants to make this -- get this done. We don't all put our  
23 pants on the same way --

24 CHAIR FERRARO: Push the --

25 MS. STALEY: -- but they all end up --

1 CHAIR FERRARO: -- push the button on your  
2 microphone and make sure you're on, will you?

3 MS. STALEY: It's on.

4 CHAIR FERRARO: Yeah?

5 MS. STALEY: Am I not speaking loud enough? I can  
6 speak louder.

7 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay.

8 MS. STALEY: Is that better?

9 CHAIR FERRARO: That's better.

10 MS. STALEY: Okay. So you and I both put our  
11 pants on, might not be the same way, but at the end of the  
12 day, our pants get on; right? So I want to take this moment  
13 to thank you for meeting with us today, and thank you for  
14 discussing bringing horse racing to Tehama District  
15 Fairgrounds.

16 Our team has worked incredibly hard to prepare  
17 everything for you. We have overcome multiple roadblocks,  
18 which have only highlighted our determination, tenacity, and  
19 passion for pursuing this.

20 I've been asked several times, why are you still  
21 pursuing this? The answer lies in the dedication of my  
22 team, who refuses to give up. This is the incredible  
23 opportunity for our fair and our community in Northern  
24 California. We are fortunate enough to do things a little  
25 bit differently. We are able to accomplish things swiftly

1 and efficiently. We managed to order 73 loads of dirt for  
2 our track within -- and have delivered within three days,  
3 all with just a couple of phone calls.

4 We are grateful for the support we've received  
5 from the CHRB legal team. Jackie has been amazing to work  
6 with. We're also in contact with Brandy Gragg, Senior  
7 Counsel for the CDFA Fairs and Expositions. Both Jackie and  
8 Brandy have received the agreements included in your packet  
9 and have not indicated any legal issues. Just because our  
10 approach is new and unconventional doesn't mean it's  
11 unlawful.

12 Our agreement with Bernal Park LLC is included in  
13 your packet, and I would like to clarify any concerns or  
14 answer any questions you may have regarding this  
15 partnership. Bernal Park LLC will serve as our consultant  
16 and financial grantor, providing advisory services on purse  
17 structure, compliance guidance, staffing vendor  
18 recommendations, and more. To date, they have been an  
19 excellent resource for connecting us with the vendors  
20 necessary to enhance our racetrack.

21 Furthermore, Bernal Park LLC is assuming all  
22 financial risks associated with the Tama District Fair meet.  
23 They are providing a line of credit to fund the race, and in  
24 the unlikely event of a major setback where the race meet is  
25 not profitable, they will bear all losses. They have

1 already demonstrated their commitment by investing \$104,000  
2 into our track without guarantee of race date allocations.  
3 If we do not receive any allocation dates, our fair will not  
4 be held responsible for repaying those improvements.

5           Recently, we've had the privilege of meeting with  
6 Richard Lewis and Jose Flores, who toured our facility.  
7 This inspection was preliminary. Most of our requirement  
8 structures will be temporary and were not available for  
9 viewing at that time of inspection.

10           Since then, we have had a rock picker go through  
11 the track, begun installing the inside rail, and met with  
12 contractors for essential -- essential for completing the  
13 required improvements. Our estimated cost to finish the  
14 improvements range from around \$55,000 to \$75,000. The  
15 remaining work will commence as soon as I inform my team  
16 that we have been allocated race dates.

17           I have attached a blueprint of where the  
18 additional structures will be placed throughout the 110-acre  
19 facility. While our track has not hosted sanctioned horse  
20 racing in decades, we do host approximately 330 events a  
21 day -- or 330 events a year, including multiple horse races  
22 during the Red Bluff Roundup every year, as well as numerous  
23 equestrian events on the track annually. Although there are  
24 improvements needed to host sanctioned racing, we have a  
25 well-utilized facility that can quickly be brought up to

1 your expectations.

2 I understand that Mr. Chaney is concerned about  
3 the deadline requirements of our race meet. However, I  
4 believe we have demonstrated our ability to meet any  
5 deadline, even those that have not been expected from other  
6 entities.

7 CHRB's legal team relayed to us that you as a  
8 Board required us to show proof of \$3 million, either in our  
9 accounts or through an executed line of credit within five  
10 business days. That deadline would be impossible for most,  
11 but attached is a fully executed line of credit agreement.  
12 You will see that we have a pre-approval line of credit  
13 through Banner Bank. Since the submission deadline, we have  
14 moved forward with opening that account.

15 We have received countless letters and emails  
16 supporting the return of horse racing to Northern  
17 California, and I know that you as a Board are aware of the  
18 testimonies at the last meeting. To date, we have  
19 commitments from over 400 horses to be -- that would be  
20 participating in our meet, and I am confident that I will  
21 be -- that it will be a tremendous success.

22 Thank you for your time, and I'll be happy to  
23 address any of your questions you may have.

24 CHAIR FERRARO: Do you have a signed agreement  
25 with Bernal Racing or just a promise?

1 MS. STALEY: I'm sorry?

2 CHAIR FERRARO: Do you have a signed agreement  
3 with Bernal for money or just a promise?

4 MS. STALEY: I have a signed agreement. It's in  
5 your packet.

6 CHAIR FERRARO: Guaranteed for how much?

7 MS. STALEY: Two and a half million.

8 CHAIR FERRARO: Do you have a CTT agreement?

9 MR. SADLER: No.

10 CHAIR FERRARO: Do you have a TOC agreement?

11 MR. NADER: No.

12 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay. Anybody else?

13 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

14 Thank you, Mindy -- or Mandy, rather. And Larry,  
15 good to see you.

16 First, I just want to applaud you and your  
17 efforts. And you're right, Northern California is committed  
18 to racing. And I know the steward that was here before, Mr.  
19 Lewis, was there firsthand and saw the devastation on what a  
20 short notice did to Northern California horsemen and to the  
21 work that we're trying to -- we're trying to address.

22 The mission of the CHRB is to promote, and to the  
23 extent that we can, expand racing, and what you're doing is  
24 you're taking up the challenge and doing everything that you  
25 can.

1           Now, the deadlines that I hear about it, why we're  
2 not further along in part, it's really just because  
3 government works slow, and so apologies are in order for us  
4 as a Board here not meeting as frequently. I think Mr.  
5 Lewis probably should have been dispatched much sooner, so  
6 he could have had your punch list.

7           But I just want to say that among the more  
8 impressive things that I looked at in my packet was the  
9 number of letters of support from not just labor unions, but  
10 from community leaders and boards of supervisors, your local  
11 state legislator. And I have seen these county fairs on  
12 very short notice -- it wasn't that long ago when Humboldt  
13 was asked to retrofit their grandstands, and their board of  
14 supervisors was able to come up with over \$1 million to make  
15 those grandstands work. So I've seen how when there's will  
16 at the local level, things do happen.

17           You know, you're undertaking a very  
18 entrepreneurial thing, which I applaud, and by the way, I'm  
19 a strong supporter of what you're doing here. But if you  
20 look back 90 years ago, there was a similar effort not far  
21 from here down in Del Mar when there was just a bunch of  
22 dirt. There was nothing there. And a lot of questions came  
23 about, about what it was going to take. We now look at Del  
24 Mar and what it is today, but at some point, it too went  
25 through its growing pains, some incomplete and outstanding

1 items. So what's being asked of you is nothing different  
2 than what was asked of Bing Crosby, Pat O'Brien, Gary Cooper  
3 90 years ago.

4           What we're starting to see is, and I think Mr.  
5 Mandella hit it, and I really appreciate him being direct,  
6 the reason they're against you is because the funding that  
7 you will take. And we're not talking a lot of funding.  
8 They're already getting \$20 million of Northern Cal. All  
9 that this racetrack will be asking is just maybe not even \$1  
10 million of that, but they want it all, and that's just not  
11 fair.

12           And I am here to support you in any way that I  
13 can, and I also will be calling out where I see some bully-  
14 like and dogpile-like tactics. And I will not let that  
15 happen while I'm on this Board. For those who don't know  
16 me, I am from Southern California. I grew up at Santa  
17 Anita, Del Mar, Pomona. I am from around here. And what I  
18 have been seeing here over the last few months has just been  
19 plain wrong on what Southern California has been doing to  
20 Northern Cal.

21           So again, I want to wish you all the best. I'm  
22 going to continue to be here for you. We need more racing,  
23 not less racing. So Mandy, good job to you, and Larry,  
24 thanks for backing them up.

25           MS. STALEY: Thank you. I appreciate that.

1 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you. I'd like to hear from  
2 TOC and CTT now, please. You can go ahead and sit back  
3 down.

4 MR. SWARTZLANDER: Chairman, I would like to speak  
5 later, though.

6 CHAIR FERRARO: I'll call you back.

7 MR. SWARTZLANDER: Okay.

8 MR. SADLER: Do you want to go first? Okay.

9 MR. NADER: Bill Nader from the TOC. Good  
10 morning, Chairman Ferraro, Vice Chairman Gonzales,  
11 Commissioners. You can see all the people in the room today  
12 that have come out to, you know, support their position.  
13 Many of them won't speak but they're here.

14 And I would just like to say in opening that  
15 before speaking directly to the Tehama District Fair  
16 application, I would like to make general comments that  
17 speak to the guiding principles in consideration of the two  
18 applications before you today.

19 We would all love to see racing return to the  
20 North someday, but it needs to happen when the time is  
21 right, something we can all justify, meeting the  
22 requirements that were laid out previously by the CHRB last  
23 year, a sound business case, feasibility study, proper  
24 funding, and organizational structure. That day is not  
25 today.

1           What we have seen over the past several months is  
2 different combinations of race date applications. What we  
3 saw in November is different than what we saw last month in  
4 January, and again, different than what we see today. The  
5 North that we once knew is not the same. There was Bay  
6 Meadows, and Golden Gate Fields, and CARF, all gone.

7           What we see today are applications for two county  
8 fairs with no active horse population in the North, and no  
9 anchor, no foundation, like a Bay Meadows, or Golden Gate  
10 Fields, or even Golden State Racing, and no CARF.

11           We would all agree that these are the most  
12 difficult and most challenging of times. And we can further  
13 agree that this is a time when the California racing  
14 industry, not Southern California, not Northern California,  
15 the California racing industry is fighting desperately to  
16 remain relevant and sustainable.

17           Which brings us to the key point, this is a zero-  
18 sum game. Dates that were awarded to Golden State Racing in  
19 2024 came in at opportunity cost of over \$6 million. After  
20 only 25 days of racing, Golden State Racing threw in the  
21 towel in December of 2024.

22           Shortly thereafter, more bad news. CARF ended its  
23 involvement with horse racing due to financial pressure  
24 imposed by the failure of the Golden State Racing  
25 experiment.

1           Everybody got hurt. \$6 million remained in the  
2 North to support the short-lived experiment of Golden State  
3 Racing at Pleasanton in lieu of redirecting that money to  
4 help live racing in the struggling south. The consensus at  
5 that time was this would be a last chance opportunity to  
6 find a potential successor to the closing of Golden Gate.  
7 Many agreed it was worth a shot, due largely to the  
8 projections, promises, and narratives orchestrated by many  
9 of the same people that are seeking your approval today.

10           As we warned at that time and later learned, those  
11 assumptions were way off the mark. And so we must ask,  
12 what's different today?

13           When the North was lobbying the TOC for the  
14 support of the 2024 Golden State Racing at Pleasanton dates,  
15 I recall two moments where the key supporters of the Golden  
16 State Racing application spoke before this Board, saying two  
17 things that stand out. I will quote directly. The first  
18 was, "If we are to fail, let us fail on our own." And the  
19 second was, "We've got the funding. We have a bank that's  
20 willing to fund this program, and we can get from here to  
21 there, just give us the chance." That was George Schmidt,  
22 page 122 of the March CHRB transcript of 2024.

23           Now, GSR at Pleasanton had a chance. They had a  
24 captive horse population, and they made it clear that they  
25 had the funding. The problem was they didn't have the

1 funding, and it failed. Golden State Racing at Pleasanton  
2 failed on its own after only 25 race days. Despite a  
3 healthy horse population of nearly 1,000 horses, the funding  
4 was not there. In fact, the North reached out to the South  
5 for financial aid immediately after the shutdown.

6 We're in a different place today. We have the  
7 benefit of this knowledge to guide us, and we are aware of  
8 the key indicators, such as available horse population,  
9 operational readiness, which makes these applications high  
10 risk. As custodians of the industry, we should not turn a  
11 blind eye when considering these applications and the  
12 consequences that would likely follow.

13 Now, speaking to this specific application for  
14 Tehama District Fair, a four-day fair that ends on May 3rd  
15 and yet seeks race dates that run through May 29, an  
16 application surrounded by many questions, the CHRB staff  
17 analysis, which I will take as read and not address further,  
18 was quite comprehensive, and others have raised additional  
19 concerns.

20 In the interest of time, you have heard from  
21 Richard Lewis and the written, the full review of the staff  
22 analysis, so I won't pile on other than to remind you of the  
23 general comments and guiding principles that are so  
24 important to our fragile California footprint that I've laid  
25 out in these opening remarks.

1           The TOC opposes the Tehama District Fair  
2 application. And I'm happy to take any questions.

3           CHAIR FERRARO: Questions from the Board?

4           VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Yeah, Mr. Chairman.

5           Mr. Nader, you and I have been kind of opposite  
6 ends of this issue for a while now. And, you know, I  
7 understand your role, I really do. There's two very  
8 important factors that people tend to leave out when it  
9 comes to Northern California racing.

10           One, we had an opportunity to keep a training  
11 center there, but the Vanning and Stabling Committee chose  
12 to not continue investing to keep a training center going at  
13 Alameda. There would be horses there they'd be shipping  
14 down. It would be a complete different dynamic than horses  
15 leaving the state. It's common knowledge. I asked, I  
16 begged towards the last minute after Alameda County Fair  
17 voted to continue racing, you guys wanted to pull the plug.  
18 Why do you want every single dollar to come down here?

19           The second factor that gets left out a lot of  
20 times is that there was not all the ADW or CAW contracts in  
21 place. So the 25 days that you mentioned of betting were  
22 nothing near what the kind of wagering that goes on at  
23 Golden Gate Fields. That is common knowledge. It's been  
24 reported on that. So they did not fail on their own. Some  
25 would even say that there may have been some monopolistic-

1 like tendencies to undercut the North. Two very important  
2 factors.

3           You know, I can't, again, I just can't resist  
4 right now. I mean, you brought up two key points about an  
5 experiment in high risk. So nobody else is able to  
6 experiment or high risk except the TOC.

7           And Bill, it's been brought to my attention that  
8 TOC invested in high risk in experimental electronic  
9 currency, better known as Bitcoin. That's not how  
10 horseman's money should be spent. And I verified that. So  
11 we're now using horseman's money to take risky investments.

12          You're going to be okay with that, but you're not going to  
13 be okay with a small two-week race course for wanting to  
14 expand racing?

15           So things just don't add up here. And I'm going  
16 to point out the hypocrisy to the extent that I can.

17           MR. NADER: Mr. Vice Chairman, on the stabling  
18 question, my recollection was that Pleasanton -- Golden  
19 State Racing at Pleasanton closed in mid-December, about 10  
20 days before Christmas. Stabling, the Stabling and Vanning  
21 Fund in the South continued to support stabling at  
22 Pleasanton through March of 2025. It was then that Alameda  
23 County Fair and CARF came back and said they did not want to  
24 continue. Alameda County Fair had the option to continue  
25 past March. They chose not to.

1           Regarding CAW and ADW, again, as we've debated  
2 this before, I did relay to you that I was happy to take a  
3 look at the CAW with you because I see it differently.

4           VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Mm-hmm.

5           MR. NADER: I mean, CAW was betting on Golden  
6 State Racing at Pleasanton. They were only doing it through  
7 the Churchill Downs platform as opposed to Elite, and then  
8 they came in through Elite. So they were coming into the  
9 pools, and they were a huge percentage of the pools. So we  
10 can go back and I can open up that invitation again.

11           But, no, CAW and ADW was participating. It did  
12 fail on its own. And stabling did continue three and a half  
13 months after the closure of Golden State Racing and was paid  
14 for by the Southern California Stabling and Vanning Fund.

15           VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Do you care to comment on  
16 experiment and high risk? And these are two words you use  
17 about TOC investing in electronic currency, Bitcoin. You  
18 got an opportunity here. What is that?

19           MR. NADER: I'm talking about high risk as it  
20 relates to the industry. I'm talking about high risk. When  
21 we look at this, the silo view is to look at it only from  
22 the lens of the fair.

23           And I get -- and I would say this from the TOC  
24 perspective, nothing but respect for all the fairs in  
25 California. There's nothing about that that enters into

1 this. What we look at is this is a silo driven initiative  
2 to help an individual fair that would look to have racing  
3 well beyond its fair dates to try to capitalize on simulcast  
4 money. And as I say, it's a zero-sum game and it comes at  
5 the expense of the other racing in California, which happens  
6 to take place at Los Alamitos, Del Mar, and Santa Anita, 52  
7 weeks a year. Nothing silo about that. That's the  
8 industry.

9           So that's where I think we have a fundamental  
10 disconnect. And we have to look at this as what is good for  
11 the California horse racing and breeding industry and not  
12 only from the lens of the individual fair.

13           CHAIR FERRARO: CTT, can we hear from you?

14           MR. SADLER: Hi. I'm John Sadler. I haven't met  
15 some of you, but I've been a trainer in California for 50  
16 years, so it's my second term here back at the CTT. I know  
17 I met Brenda at Del Mar last summer, but I'd just like to  
18 introduce myself.

19           First of all, we're all sympathetic to these  
20 applicants, but our feeling is at this time, we cannot  
21 support, you know, any of this. We're very weak in the  
22 South. You can see the horses leaving the state. There's  
23 no question about that.

24           And in regards to, she said she had 400 people  
25 interested in racing there, nobody's contacted me. No

1 trainer in California says they have any interest in racing  
2 at Ferndale or --

3 CHAIR FERRARO: Tehama.

4 MR. SADLER: what's it called?

5 CHAIR FERRARO: Tehama.

6 MR. SADLER: Tehama. I thought it was Red Bluff.  
7 Okay. But nobody, nobody has, you know, reached out and  
8 said, we want this to happen. So at this time, the CTT  
9 cannot support it. I'm happy to take any questions.

10 CHAIR FERRARO: Questions from the Board?

11 MR. SADLER: We'll let Alan go and then we'll  
12 answer questions.

13 MR. BALCH: Alan Balch, Executive Director of CTT.  
14 And thank you, John.

15 There are a lot of people here today from the  
16 backstretch in Southern California that we represent. I'd  
17 like all of them to stand up, a combination of trainers and  
18 their stable employees. Please stand up, because they've  
19 been here to support the position that you've heard from  
20 John and from the TOC that we cannot support these  
21 applications at this time. That's critical; at this time.

22 As disturbing as the loss of Northern California  
23 racing has been, we need to face the facts. Those  
24 Commissioners who've heard me testify on this before have  
25 known that I have always been in favor and CTT has always

1 been in favor of giving Northern California the opportunity,  
2 the opportunity to try, as Mr. Nader pointed out. But  
3 unfortunately, we have to face the facts now. These  
4 statewide circumstances we are facing now just show that  
5 this is uneconomic to try to go forward with these fair  
6 meets in Northern California.

7           You know the old saying, experience is never worth  
8 very much until you have it. Well, we have the experience  
9 now, with all due respect to Commissioner Gonzales. We've  
10 seen what's happened to the horse population statewide, not  
11 to mention public interest. And we just have seen this  
12 significant decline and concentration now of the horse  
13 population we do have that is critical for the success and  
14 continuation of racing at Santa Anita, Del Mar, and Los  
15 Alamitos.

16           I'm advised that on the North-south redirect,  
17 there would be an impact of between \$1 million and \$1.2  
18 million in purses to the detriment of Southern California  
19 purses were these meets to go forward. And a like amount,  
20 that is another \$1 million to \$1.2 million in track  
21 commissions. Let's not forget that it's not just purses,  
22 it's commissions to the racetracks too.

23           And we need to make sure we as horsemen, trainers,  
24 owners, need to do our part to see that the -- what happened  
25 at Golden Gate doesn't happen further. Granting these dates

1 would threaten the racetracks that are currently existing  
2 here and the livelihoods of the trainers and their employees  
3 who you've seen here in the room represented today.

4           So just to repeat, maybe after a period of  
5 stabilization, maybe with enough time to prepare properly,  
6 this would be a different story. But given the facts that  
7 are in your packet, we just cannot support the applications,  
8 either of these applications at this time.

9           CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you. Questions from the  
10 Board?

11           COMMISSIONER DAVIS: So I think --

12           CHAIR FERRARO: Go ahead.

13           COMMISSIONER DAVIS: -- Oscar pointed out that  
14 it's, what, about \$20 million in ADW and only \$2 million of  
15 that would be affected if these Northern California races go  
16 forward; correct?

17           MR. BALCH: Well, I think Bill Nader is better  
18 able than I am to address the actual specific amounts. But  
19 my understanding, \$1 million to \$1.2 million at each of  
20 these race meetings in purses and a like amount, that is  
21 another \$2 million to \$3 million in track commissions.  
22 Because remember, the North to south redirect subsidizes the  
23 purse program, enhances the purse program in Southern  
24 California, but also provides much needed income and  
25 stability to the -- by way of track commissions to Santa

1 Anita, Del Mar, and Los Alamitos. That's critically  
2 important.

3 We've seen what happens when a track operator can  
4 claim they're losing money. That's what happened at Golden  
5 Gate. And we know what happened in Northern California  
6 through Golden State racing, unfortunately.

7 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: So how would you -- how would  
8 that change over time if they were to wait? What difference  
9 would it make --

10 MR. BALCH: Meaning?

11 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: -- if that's your argument?

12 MR. BALCH: Meaning the at this time? Well, we  
13 want to see Southern California racing stabilized and  
14 healthy so we can grow again. That's the real trouble. If  
15 Southern California racing declines and there's less  
16 incentive for people to stay and race in Southern  
17 California, I think we can all see where that leads.

18 CHAIR FERRARO: John, if there was a decrease in  
19 the purses, say, at Del Mar, for example, because of the  
20 simulcast going somewhere else, how many trainers and how  
21 many horses do you think would leave California? And how  
22 about your Ship and Win; would that be affected?

23 MR. SADLER: Well, I mean, I think if you look  
24 already, many of our trainers are already setting up  
25 baseheads out of state, whether it's Peter Eurton, Doug

1 O'Neill, Michael McCarthy. I mean, there's a lot of people  
2 already because the purses are better everywhere else. In  
3 Kentucky, you know that --

4 CHAIR FERRARO: Yeah.

5 MR. SADLER: -- the purses are huge. So we're at  
6 a disadvantage as we are. And I don't think that we  
7 could -- you know, to lose, as Bill said to me, it's a five  
8 percent purse cut in the South if these meets go. And five  
9 percent more horses gone, you know? And then pretty soon  
10 there's going to be nothing here. And that's not going to  
11 bode well for horse racing in California. We're at a very,  
12 you know, extreme point here. And that's just the  
13 situation, unfortunately.

14 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: But I think we know that the  
15 real problem here is the lack of subsidies and the HSR, not  
16 competition by having a Northern California circuit.

17 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: No supplements from slots.

18 MR. SADLER: Yeah, well, I mean, we're hoping that  
19 if we get going again, maybe some good news happens on the  
20 subsidies. You know, it's in the court system now. And I  
21 probably can't say this, maybe if we get some good news  
22 politically, I don't think -- you know, we have an election  
23 coming up this year, you know, maybe we can start to build  
24 back.

25 That's the idea, you know, that I've been working

1 with, is how we can build back up in the South. And then in  
2 time, if something goes well our way, then we could look at  
3 this again. But this time it's just not feasible for the  
4 horses that are here.

5 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Yeah, just a couple quick  
6 points. And it has to do with the reliance on the Cal-bred  
7 program. It wasn't that long ago where Cal-breds were maybe  
8 20 percent of a card. Where are we at now, Alan, about  
9 half?

10 MR. BALCH: Close.

11 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: So we --

12 MR. BALCH: Close.

13 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: So -- and we also are  
14 experiencing a foal crop that is nosediving, probably right  
15 around 800. It's just going to keep going down. The reason  
16 is, is because the breeding that goes on in California is  
17 primarily in the North. And what I have heard loud and  
18 clear from the breeders is they're literally getting out  
19 because there is nowhere for them to kind of spread their  
20 investments across the table.

21 So I find it very interesting that trainers would  
22 be very much in favor, especially when we just don't know  
23 what the future is for Santa Anita or the Stronach Group.  
24 We just don't know. We see what they've done in Maryland.  
25 We see what they've done in -- what they're doing in

1 Florida. But we're willing to put all of our chips, rather  
2 than spreading them out? So by keeping some presence in the  
3 North, even if it's just summer -- remember, one circuit for  
4 a long time ago was talked about some level of fairs.  
5 That's all the breeders want, the hundreds of breeders that  
6 are out there. And I have a background in agriculture and I  
7 interact with a lot of them. Breeding is one source of  
8 revenue for them.

9           So if we're relying more heavily on the Cal-bred,  
10 but we know the Cal-bred program is going down and the big  
11 reason because they're going down is because there's no  
12 place for them to train or race, I don't understand. So  
13 we're willing to -- of the \$20 million, you guys want it  
14 all, why not just leave \$2 million up there so that the  
15 breeders -- and maybe you guys have a conversation with the  
16 breeders, say we will reverse our position, we'll be in  
17 favor of fair racing. But you want to see these breeders  
18 step up their game politically to go out and knock on some  
19 politicians' doors and help.

20           I just don't really see a strategy here by  
21 completely eliminating Northern Cal racing. Because when  
22 you do that, you're eliminating breeding. And if you're  
23 eliminating breeding, guess what? You're eliminating the  
24 Cal-bred program eventually.

25           MR. SADLER: So --

1 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: So I just want to say --

2 MR. SADLER: -- are you saying that if these  
3 little fairs go on up north, that -- and Santa Anita's gone,  
4 that's better than nothing?

5 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: No. No, I'm not saying that  
6 at all. What I am saying is that by having these little  
7 fairs, you're sending a message to the breeding community in  
8 Northern California, one, that they matter and that there's  
9 going to be a place for them to compete. Just like when you  
10 -- you'd like people to come out to the barns, the stables,  
11 to the Clockers' Corner, they'd like the same thing up  
12 there. So if you're going to take that away, what's the  
13 incentive?

14 What we're trying to tell them is, keep breeding,  
15 keep sending us your horses. And for the ones that work,  
16 great. For the ones that don't -- I just think, I'm just  
17 saying this, Mr. Sadler, I got a lot of respect for you. A  
18 lot of respect for you. I know a lot that you've done for  
19 horsemen, for the community. But I, one, would not trust  
20 TOC for their numbers only. Because of course they're going  
21 to tell you five percent cut. Of course they're going to  
22 say that to try to get you and others here.

23 But just think about what we're doing with the  
24 breeding program that is nosediving. After today's meeting,  
25 if in fact we do not approve of these fairs, these breeders

1 are going to really be sending their broodmares out. And we  
2 will start to see a full crop down in the 600 to 700s, which  
3 is, we might as well just throw in the towel at that point.  
4 We have --

5 CHAIR FERRARO: I hate to be argumentative, but  
6 the way to improve breeding for California-breds is to breed  
7 better horses, not breed horses for the fairs. Because if  
8 you keep breeding those kind of horses, you'll never be  
9 successful.

10 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: That makes racing those --

11 MR. SADLER: I think a lot of the breeders that  
12 are breeding, you know, have to change their -- you know,  
13 they're going to change their business plan a little bit,  
14 you know, to breed more for the South. Terry Lovingier,  
15 there's a lot of breeders out there that are, you know,  
16 upping their, upping their stake.

17 But I don't know if I like you characterizing that  
18 I don't -- Bill's numbers. Bill's been excellent with the  
19 numbers. So I do believe the TOC's numbers.

20 CHAIR FERRARO: The point is, we're right there at  
21 the tipping point. And by ferrying funds away in the North  
22 that has no chance of success, and let me say it again, as  
23 much as I'd like to see them do well, they have no chance of  
24 success. There's just no market for them up there. So  
25 you're going to end up destroying all of racing in

1 California to bet on a no chance situation in the North.  
2 There will come a time when the North will be ready for  
3 racing, but it's not right now.

4 Any comments from the Board, other comments?

5 Thanks, gentlemen.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: Can I just ask a  
7 logistical question? Sorry, I'll put on my staff hat.  
8 Tehama's complete license application is due Tuesday, like  
9 five days from now. Will they have a TOC agreement or a CTT  
10 agreement?

11 MR. SADLER: No.

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: Okay.

13 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: They don't need one, because  
14 the Board, we can approve it as we've done without one.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: Well, you would have  
16 to assign one, actually. You can't operate without a TOC  
17 agreement --

18 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: We would.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: -- or a CTT.

20 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: But the Board can do that.  
21 We would agendize it or whatever.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: Correct, on March 11.

23 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Let's just be very clear.  
24 We appreciate your agreements, but we don't need it to be  
25 able to conduct racing.

1 CHAIR FERRARO: Well, we can argue this --

2 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: We've already done that  
3 before.

4 CHAIR FERRARO: -- ad infinitum. I'd like to call  
5 the vote amongst the Board. And the Chairman will make, at  
6 least with Tehama, I think they're -- in no way, shape, or  
7 form are they ready to start a race meet and be successful  
8 at it. So I would move that we turn down their application  
9 for racing. I'd look for a second.

10 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: I don't know if that's the  
11 way the procedure works, Mr. Chairman.

12 Thank you, gentlemen.

13 CHAIR FERRARO: And we can take public comment on  
14 the motion, can't we?

15 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: Mr. Chairman, have we  
16 heard from our staff as far as their response and what they  
17 have found out and discovered?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: The staff analysis, I  
19 think, really lays out like, you know, staff position.  
20 Obviously, there are massive logistical problems. The  
21 license application is due Tuesday. One other thing I  
22 wanted to ask -- and before that takes place, they need an  
23 inspection and pass it. That has to, again, happen by  
24 Tuesday.

25 And so Mandy said that Mr. Chaney, me, was not --

1 like was worried about the deadlines. It's not me that's  
2 worried about the deadlines. It's the regulations and  
3 statutes that outline the deadlines that are the problem.

4           On should the Board allocate race dates, you would  
5 also need to suspend the 90-day rule, which exists for a  
6 good reason. You would have to assign a CTT agreement, a  
7 TOC agreement, and they would also need a track inspection  
8 before Tuesday that they pass. Obviously, there are major,  
9 you know, problems.

10           The one thing I was wanting to ask Larry about,  
11 one of the missing items in their draft application that  
12 they gave was a lack of a tote agreement. And I was just  
13 wondering what was happening on the tote company. I'm  
14 assuming AmTote would be the tote company. Do we have any  
15 idea how much it would cost and like what kind of  
16 infrastructure would have to take place in the next 30 days?  
17 Like all of these things are just -- it's not going to  
18 happen. I mean, I hate to sort of divide the Board here,  
19 but logistically, it's not possible.

20           VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Scott, you're the Executive  
21 Director, but there's a process here. Once there's a motion  
22 on the table, then there's a second. We've got to have some  
23 formalities here. So --

24           EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: Sure.

25           VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- I appreciate you weighing

1 in and offering your opinion, and it's obviously reflected  
2 in the staff analysis, so good job there, but these folks  
3 have come a very long way, a very long way to be here, and  
4 thank you for that. So they're owed a formal process as it  
5 relates to their item on the agenda.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: Well, what do you  
7 suggest?

8 CHAIR FERRARO: Going back to the Chairman's  
9 motion.

10 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Well, I just want to make  
11 sure you're done, first of all, You're weighing in.

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: Because one of my  
13 Board members asked me to weigh in.

14 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: Okay.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: I was responding to  
16 Commissioner Castellanos.

17 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: I asked a question, and  
18 so he's answering. And I believe Larry wanted to say  
19 something, so I think we should let Larry speak before we do  
20 anything else.

21 CHAIR FERRARO: Go ahead, Larry.

22 MR. SWARTZLANDER: Good morning. Good morning,  
23 Commissioners. Let me just do a little background first.  
24 Where is Larry coming from? Is he resurrected to a burning  
25 Phoenix? You all know I retired in February of last year

1 from CARF. And just to be clear, CARF is not dead. CARF is  
2 an organization right now that has a limited scope only to  
3 satellites in the North.

4 My situation in this capacity is that I was  
5 approached directly from the fairs to be their director of  
6 racing. So I'm standing in front of you today as a  
7 representative, a Director of Racing for Tehama, Humboldt  
8 County, and Fresno. Fresno was -- I attended their board  
9 meeting the day before I came up here.

10 The whole situation of what the staff reviewed,  
11 and Mr. Chaney asked a valid question about tote. I've  
12 already talked to Tote [sic]. That's a California contract.  
13 Obviously, it would have to be amended. You know, the union  
14 contracts for both the starters, you know, the mutuel  
15 people, those contracts would have to be amended.

16 In the state of California, for example, in the  
17 unions for the mutuels, I mean, I still believe Santa Anita  
18 has a separate contract. And when I was working with the  
19 situation of, some of you may remember, Calypso, that, you  
20 know, we were looking at that same question, how do you get  
21 tote support? And it's very feasible to get a separate,  
22 negotiate a separate contract.

23 The other concern I heard about is tote. You  
24 know, I specifically -- most of you probably weren't around  
25 back in the early 80s, but CARF's mission when they started

1 out was to set up mobile sites. They did this on a 30- to  
2 60-day notice. It's very reasonable to do.

3           The challenges that Tehama faces, certainly  
4 they're strong. You know, but this industry, I'm up here to  
5 talk to racing throughout the United States of California.  
6 I'm not to bear the cross against Southern California. I  
7 spoke to Bill yesterday. I spoke to Alan. I spoke to Josh.  
8 I spoke to Eric Sindler. You know, we all understand where  
9 racing's at. We all agree on one thing. We want to make it  
10 better.

11           You know, I don't have to be here. I'm not -- you  
12 know, nobody's paying me. I love the industry. I love  
13 horses. You know, and I'm going to have a horse in the  
14 Kentucky Derby. You know, this is a situation where, forget  
15 the negatives. Forget about Golden State Racing and blame  
16 me. Sacrifice me.

17           Listen, we need to do something for the future of  
18 racing. And to simply here beat up Golden State Racing and  
19 the history of the fairs, and I heard the old cliché, we'll  
20 come back next year. And Chairman Alfieri [sic], you said  
21 that last year to me. Come back better next year when you  
22 got a better plan.

23           Well, here we are. And I'm here to say that we  
24 can do this. It's an opportunity to bring back fairs that  
25 have the people that want to race. They want to take care

1 of their communities. That's what it's all about.

2 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you, Larry.

3 Okay, do we have a second to my motion?

4 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Second.

5 CHAIR FERRARO: Now, we have some discussion from  
6 the Board on the motion.

7 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Apparently, you have -- do  
8 you have public comment, Mr. Chairman?

9 CHAIR FERRARO: Yes, I got it here. Anybody at  
10 the Board?

11 Okay, we'll go through public comments. Leonard  
12 Miranda.

13 MR. MIRANDA: Yeah, I just want to make sure I'm  
14 in right order. My name is Leonard Miranda. But I'm not  
15 sure if I should be coming at the end. I got a little  
16 confused about when I should be making my comment. So I'm  
17 not really here to vote on that issue. I think it's pretty  
18 well been discussed. So is this an appropriate time to make  
19 my comments?

20 CHAIR FERRARO: Are you talking about Tehama  
21 County Fair or not?

22 MR. MIRANDA: No, it was a public comment.

23 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay, then come in another time.

24 MR. MIRANDA: Okay. Thank you.

25 CHAIR FERRARO: Samantha. Again, confine these

1 things to approval or not approval of Tehama County, its  
2 license to operate.

3 SAMANTHA: Good morning, Commissioners. I'm here  
4 to speak in defense of horses and other animals.

5 My comment is based on the content in your meeting  
6 packet for Tehama District Racing. Your on-track attendance  
7 and fan development graphics are pure propaganda. The  
8 jockeys have no riding props, but let's call it what they  
9 are, whips, used to beat the horses and make them run  
10 faster.

11 The packet states, "The Tehama District  
12 Fairgrounds is excited to welcome the thrilling world of  
13 live horse racing." There's nothing thrilling about horse  
14 racing. It is horrifying for the horses. This is all done  
15 so people can gamble. And gambling ruins and destroy lives  
16 for humans and horses.

17 It is not thrilling to see terrified horses  
18 reluctant to load and sometimes flipping over in the  
19 starting gate. It is terrifying to witness public displays  
20 of animal cruelty, horses being flogged and pushed to the  
21 limit. It is not thrilling to watch horses clip heels,  
22 fall, get trampled on, and suffer catastrophic injuries.  
23 There's nothing thrilling about horse racing.

24 Your grassroots marketing says that marketing team  
25 attends rodeos. Rodeos are nothing but a public display of

1 violence against innocent animals. Rodeos show people how  
2 to be bullies. They are for people who take pleasure in  
3 watching animals get roped, strangled, chased, slammed to  
4 the ground. You know that rodeo and horse racing are  
5 complementary because they're both a display of violence  
6 towards innocent animals. Rodeo and horse racing corrupts  
7 our society by encouraging people to celebrate cruelty to  
8 animals and gambling, all in the name of entertainment so a  
9 few people can continue to make a lot of money.

10 Thank you.

11 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

12 SAMANTHA: I have a colleague who --

13 CHAIR FERRARO: Lynn?

14 SAMANTHA: -- didn't get a chance to sign up.

15 CHAIR FERRARO: No, I'll call the people, please.

16 SAMANTHA: Thank you.

17 CHAIR FERRARO: Lynn?

18 LYNN: Thank you, Commissioners. And thank you  
19 again for taking my comment.

20 When I spoke earlier, everything I said was  
21 regarding the Tehama application, so I hope that applies  
22 here as well.

23 But just so you know, the online CHRB  
24 veterinarian's list has not been functional since at least  
25 January 23, 2026, which the CHRB acknowledged on its

1 website. This does not bode well for having live horse  
2 races in very remote locations like Red Bluff and Tehama  
3 County. Would it even be added to the vet list given that  
4 we still see virtually no listings for San Luis Rey Downs  
5 Training Center, which CHRB itself lists as a CHRB  
6 enclosure?

7           Also, too, I have a quote from a recent *Times-*  
8 *Standard* article. It was on February 21st, 2026. It's  
9 entitled, *Few Large Animals, Vets Juggling After Hours*  
10 *Emergency Care*. And so this is a direct quote. First of  
11 all, it lists the veterinarian. It's in the article. And  
12 it's regarding Tehama race dates. And it states that,

13           "It will be a disservice to the Humboldt County  
14 community for Dr. Samantha Burke to be a long distance  
15 away from Tehama County to cover horse races there."

16 And it says, quote, "When asked if two are enough,  
17 mixed animal veterinarian Dr. Samantha Burke said,  
18 'Basically, I think we could make it work. Having a  
19 third doctor would be ideal,' she said. But she noted,  
20 'Veterinarian offices struggled to recruit vets to this  
21 area. We have a hard time getting veterinarians here,  
22 let alone large animal veterinarians.'"

23           As I said earlier, both of the vets that are  
24 listed for care neither have veterinarian experience at a  
25 current documented experience overseeing thoroughbred race

1 meets under HISA.

2           And then, so anyways, well, thank you for my  
3 comment. I said a lot earlier.

4           CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

5           Klara?

6           KLARA: Hello. Regarding racing at Tehama, the  
7 CHRB has a documented history of failing to fully account  
8 for racing fatalities, and the public has not forgotten.

9           The Tehama District Fair in Red Bluff has been  
10 noted many times. It's a remote venue. What independent  
11 oversight will be present? Who will ensure that the 72-hour  
12 reporting death rule is followed? Why should the public  
13 trust an honor system in an industry that constantly  
14 demonstrates it will exploit technicalities to avoid  
15 accountability?

16           I repeat, the Tehama District Fair in Red Bluff is  
17 a remote venue, which sounds like a really expensive and  
18 work-intensive venture for what also sounds like a dying  
19 industry.

20           Speaking of expensive, a \$55,000 jockey room was  
21 brought up like seven speakers ago, and it must be noted  
22 that the jockey aboard One Millimeter Relentless is now  
23 paralyzed. This is the second time in recent years that a  
24 jockey has been permanently paralyzed and a horse killed in  
25 the same race. The other case involved Vinnie Bednar, who

1 was riding Peek It Up in what became her fatal race.

2 Jockeys understand that racing is dangerous. Many  
3 even wear PDJF insignia, representing the Permanently  
4 Disabled Jockeys Fund. They know the risks when they mount  
5 a horse. Why they get on, I don't know. But the horses do  
6 not. They do not choose to participate. They cannot assess  
7 danger. They cannot give informed consent. They are bred,  
8 confined, trained, and sent to high-speed competition  
9 entirely at human direction.

10 When a jockey is catastrophically injured, there  
11 are support systems, fundraising efforts, and lifetime  
12 assistance. When a horse suffers a catastrophic injury, the  
13 outcome is almost always euthanasia. There is no  
14 Permanently Disabled Horse Fund. There is no safety net  
15 waiting for them. There is always fatal injection.

16 Racing is your identity, not theirs. These  
17 animals are treated as if they are toys to play with, but  
18 they are not objects to exploit. They must be respected as  
19 the unique individuals each of them have always been, even  
20 while they are being used, pushed beyond their limits, and  
21 discarded. They have never owed their bodies to you and it  
22 has always been despicable to perceive these animals as  
23 tools for entertainment or as trivial symbols of a cruel  
24 tradition or identity.

25 If this industry cannot operate without killing

1 young horses and permanently injuring both equine and human  
2 athletes, then the public has every right to question  
3 whether it should be operating at all, and especially not in  
4 Tehama.

5 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay, your time is up. Thank you.  
6 Jamie?

7 JAMIE: First, I'd like to comment on Larry's  
8 statement that we should disregard the negativity for horse  
9 racing. In my opinion, we should not be disregarding the  
10 horse deaths, which in my thoughts is what the negativity of  
11 the racing industry is. So I would like you to think about  
12 that statement.

13 Regarding the discussion of horse abuse at the  
14 Tehama District Fair, let's review what happened last year.  
15 When Belinda Stronach pulled the plug on Golden Gate Fields,  
16 the Alameda County Fair was hoping to take in those horses  
17 and race nine months out of the year, but that didn't  
18 happen.

19 Instead, the Alameda County Fair spent \$5 million  
20 to make Pleasanton the new Mecca for Northern California  
21 racing, and it fell flat. Jerome Hoban, the CEO of the  
22 Alameda County Fair Association, called it the biggest  
23 disaster of my career. I think you all are starting to  
24 understand why he said that today.

25 A January 2025 *Horse Racing Nation* article states,

1 "The CHRB unanimously gave CARF a chance to fill the  
2 Golden Gate void with a fall meet 28 miles away in  
3 Pleasanton under the name Golden State Racing. It was  
4 a failure. Limping to the finish after 26 dates, two  
5 purse cuts and 62 percent, 62 percent less handle than  
6 Golden Gate lured in the fall of 2023."

7 The definition of insanity is doing the same thing  
8 over and over and expecting different results. Trying to  
9 revive fair racing in Northern California is insanity.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

12 Phoenix?

13 PHOENIX: I'm commenting on the attempt to bring  
14 horse racing to the Tehama District Fair. Horse racing is  
15 not only cruel, violent, and deadly, it is also corrupt,  
16 shady, and cost prohibitive.

17 Your meeting packet describes in great detail the  
18 tremendous effort that would be required to make this  
19 happen. Projected total cost is between \$3 million to \$4  
20 million, which actually seems low.

21 Tehama's time estimates are also not on track, pun  
22 intended, with CHRB estimates. Tehama guesses it will need  
23 \$55K and four weeks to get the track ready, while the Board  
24 puts these figures at \$1 million and several months.

25 Their application was due a month ago. So if this

1 horse killing meet is approved, it will require a vote to  
2 suspend CHRB Rule 1433. Not only was the application  
3 submitted late, but it was fraught with a long list of  
4 deficiencies. Approving this meet would be a crystal clear  
5 indication of how the Board disregards its own rules and  
6 requirements.

7           Your packet also describes the dumping of horses  
8 to Emerald Downs, Washington, and Turf Paradise, Arizona.  
9 Approving this meet would be the endorsement of abusing,  
10 trafficking, and killing innocent horses. Every horse is  
11 someone, and everyone deserves empathy.

12           Thank you.

13           CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

14           Rozamund Barclay?

15           MS. BARCLAY: Sorry about this. Good morning, and  
16 thank you for the opportunity to speak.

17           I'm Rozamund Barclay. I'm an owner and breeder of  
18 thoroughbred race horses. And I'm here today to appeal to  
19 this Board to try and keep in mind that we have virtually  
20 thrown out the infrastructure of California racing if we  
21 don't try and do something to help the North. Hundreds of  
22 horsemen, horses, they've left the state. If we don't do  
23 something to stop the bleeding, it's going to continue.

24           And out of great respect for all the people from  
25 Southern California in this room, I consider a lot of them

1 friends, this isn't going to work. They're, by their own  
2 admission, racing is very fragile in Southern California  
3 right now. And are we really going to put all our eggs in  
4 one basket? We need to do something to preserve the  
5 infrastructure that has a historic support for the industry.

6 And I think that there are going to be failures,  
7 possibly more, on attempts to race in the North. But I beg  
8 you and appeal to you to keep an open mind that this is  
9 going to be a process.

10 Thank you, Mr. Gonzales. I think it's very  
11 important to recognize we can't not try to do something for  
12 the people of the North. I think our breeding industry is  
13 in dire straits and it takes three years from the time you  
14 breed a mare to get these horses to the races. So you can't  
15 expect the breeding industry to snap its fingers and change  
16 and just all of a sudden stop breeding the horses they have.  
17 It doesn't work that way.

18 So the other thing I would like to take the time  
19 to say here today is addressing those in the room who are so  
20 concerned for animal rights. I would wish that every  
21 homeless person, every starving child in this country would  
22 get the care, the health care, the nutrition, the shelter,  
23 the daily passionate care that these thoroughbred horses  
24 receive.

25 Thank you.

1 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you, Oscar.

2 Oscar? Oscar de la Torre, do you want to speak  
3 again? No? Okay.

4 Any other comments from the Board before we take a  
5 vote?

6 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: Mr. Chairman, I have a  
7 question. Regarding the -- no matter what happens here  
8 today with this topic, is -- are they able to run without a  
9 CTT agreement or TOC --

10 CHAIR FERRARO: No.

11 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: -- in place at all?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: No. So you have to  
13 have a CTT -- it's statutory; right? You need a CTT  
14 agreement and a TOC agreement.

15 As you probably recall, two or three years ago,  
16 the Board can hold, if there's no agreement, the Board can  
17 hold a hearing and assign one. It was painful a few years  
18 ago when there was no CTT agreement and that was principally  
19 about adjudicatory process they were going to -- if a track  
20 was going to kick a trainer off and so on, and they were  
21 disagreeing. And so we ended up assigning one.

22 The TOC agreement is a little bit more complicated  
23 because the TOC agreement has really specific things in it,  
24 like per structure and so on. And so we could hold a  
25 hearing but we would have to, as a Board, decide what their

1    purse structure is going to be and like assign all of those  
2    elements, which is a little bit more complicated than the  
3    CTT agreement.

4                So it is possible to do.  It's just not,  
5    obviously, the best practice.

6                CHAIR FERRARO:  Okay.

7                COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS:  Thank you.

8                CHAIR FERRARO:  We'll start your end, Peter.  So  
9    the motion is to not approve the race meet for Tehama.

10               COMMISSIONER STERN:  Calling for a vote.

11               CHAIR FERRARO:  A vote, yeah.

12               COMMISSIONER STERN:  No.

13               CHAIR FERRARO:  Commissioner Davis?

14               COMMISSIONER DAVIS:  The motion is to not approve.

15               CHAIR FERRARO:  Yes.

16               COMMISSIONER DAVIS:  So if I want to approve, my  
17    vote is yes.

18               CHAIR FERRARO:  Your vote is -- no, it would be  
19    no.

20               COMMISSIONER DAVIS:  Okay, so that's why --

21               COMMISSIONER STERN:  I would like to change my  
22    vote.

23               COMMISSIONER DAVIS:  That's why --

24               COMMISSIONER STERN:  My vote is yes.

25               COMMISSIONER DAVIS:  -- I was confused.

1 CHAIR FERRARO: Your vote is yes?

2 COMMISSIONER STERN: Yes.

3 CHAIR FERRARO: I misunderstood.

4 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: A double negative. Yes,  
5 please.

6 CHAIR FERRARO: And yours is no?

7 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Okay, my vote is to approve.  
8 So if the vote is to not approve, then I oppose that.

9 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay, so yours is no. His is yes.  
10 Yours is no.

11 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: I'm also no.

12 CHAIR FERRARO: You're also a no.

13 Damascus?

14 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: Okay, again, pose the  
15 question.

16 CHAIR FERRARO: To not approve Tehama County Fair  
17 for a race meet.

18 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: Do not approve.

19 CHAIR FERRARO: Dennis?

20 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: I do not approve.

21 CHAIR FERRARO: And the Chairman does not approve.  
22 I'm sorry, but we can't let you go forward.

23 Let's take a 10-minute break before we take up  
24 Humboldt.

25 (Off the record at 11:24 a.m.)

1 (On the record at 12:37 a.m.)

2 CHAIR FERRARO: All right, everyone. If I could  
3 ask the Del Mar and Santa Anita representatives to come up  
4 to the table here, please? We'll start off with you guys.

5 Are you going to say a few words to begin with/

6 (Colloquy between Chair Ferraro and Executive Director  
7 Chaney)

8 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay, gentlemen, we heard a lot  
9 about the effect on Southern California racing with the last  
10 item, number one. We're here for item number two, Humboldt  
11 County Fair. Can you give us the big picture here?

12 MR. RUBINSTEIN: Sure. Good morning, CHRB  
13 Commissioners and staff. Josh Rubinstein with the Del Mar  
14 Thoroughbred Club. And most of my comments, which will be  
15 brief, you know, thank you.

16 Look, over the last two years, we've had lengthy  
17 discussion about the horse population in California. And I  
18 think Mr. Balch and Mr. Sadler put it very well. At this  
19 time, we do not have the horse population or the stability  
20 to offer parallel race means. And as we saw in 2025 with  
21 Golden State Racing in Northern California, the amount of  
22 handle was minimal in terms of the total impact for  
23 California racing. And as Mr. Nader said, and I very much  
24 agree with this, first generation in California is a zero-  
25 sum game. So if there is a parallel race meet during Del

1 Mar, during Santa Anita, it will take away from purses in  
2 the South.

3           And as it relates to Del Mar, the next agenda item  
4 for racing at Ferndale is smack in the middle of Del Mar.  
5 And race dates during that time would result in a purse  
6 reduction at Del Mar in our summer meet of 2026, which would  
7 be very unfortunate because after, you know, several years  
8 of declining purse generation, reduced field size, in 2025,  
9 we saw a nice bump. Nice bump in field size, nice bump in  
10 purses, not just at Del Mar, but at Santa Anita and Los  
11 Alamitos. And we're very much hoping that single circuit  
12 can continue for the betterment of California racing and  
13 hopefully to get some stability.

14           MR. NADER: As far as racing goes, we just echo  
15 what Del Mar had to say. We have nothing novel to add.

16           The one thing to point out separately from Santa  
17 Anita's point of view is just Humboldt does not have a tote  
18 contract yet. And while AmTote would certainly be happy to  
19 talk to them about tote contract, just want to make sure  
20 that Humboldt has factored in the cost to get up and running  
21 because there is no there's no personnel in Northern  
22 California right now. So just want to make sure that they  
23 have factored in the cost of getting a tote system up and  
24 running in Northern California.

25           CHAIR FERRARO: Okay, questions from the Board?

1 None?

2 Thank you, gentlemen.

3 Can we hear from the Humboldt County Fair people  
4 now? Perry Gomez and Larry Swartzlander?

5 Oh, they're putting all the pressure on you.

6 MS. KENNY: I like it. Good morning, everybody.  
7 Good morning, Chairman, Commissioners and staff. This is  
8 Moira Kenny, Humboldt County Fair.

9 Thank you for agreeing to convene a meeting  
10 specifically to address the future of racing in Northern  
11 California. We understand that holding an off-cycle meeting  
12 requires additional time and effort. And we sincerely  
13 appreciate the Board's commitment to giving this issue  
14 focused consideration.

15 I also want to thank you for the staff analysis  
16 and for clearly identifying where you need additional  
17 clarity, particularly around staffing, payroll, contractor  
18 payments and funding certainties. We understand the Board's  
19 responsibility to allocate race dates in the best interest  
20 of racing in California and we respect that responsibility.

21 Because this is a notice meeting, I cannot  
22 introduce new documentation today beyond what has already  
23 been submitted. However, I do want to clarify that Humboldt  
24 County Fair has a clear understanding of the true cost of  
25 operating a race meet based on our 2024 actuals. In 2024,

1 our horse racing expenses included, but we're not limited to  
2 \$89,000 in union salaries, \$25,000 in non-union salaries,  
3 over \$20,000 in payroll taxes and benefits during that  
4 three-week period. That places direct payroll at  
5 approximately \$134,000 with union labor representing the  
6 majority of that cost.

7 In addition, we paid approximately \$133,000 in  
8 contracted professional services, of which \$45,000 was union  
9 payroll through contracted services, along with significant  
10 car CARF billbacks and operational expenses. These are not  
11 projections. They are actual paid costs from a successfully  
12 conducted meet.

13 We know what it costs to run this meet. We have  
14 paid these wages. We have met these contractor obligations.  
15 We are refining for 2026. What we are refining for 2026 is  
16 the operational structure, not the underlying financial  
17 reality.

18 On the issue of the line of credit, we understand  
19 that the Board needs certainty, not assumptions. The  
20 concern about availability and financial exposure is not --  
21 is a valid concern. However, Humboldt will not conduct a  
22 meet without confirmed, dedicated funding sufficient to  
23 cover direct payroll, union wages, contract payments,  
24 purses, insurance, regulatory costs, and other associated  
25 expenses. Those obligations will be secured first. We are

1 prepared to provide documentation clarifying the structure  
2 and availability of the credit facility so there is no  
3 ambiguity about financial capacity before racing begins.

4           With respect to timing, we understand our license  
5 application is due May 7th, under the Rule 1433. Although  
6 that deadline falls just ahead of the May Board meeting, we  
7 respectfully request that our completed application be  
8 reviewed for approval at the May 13th meeting. If that is  
9 not feasible within the Board scheduling framework, we  
10 intend to present a substantially complete set of materials  
11 by the March 11th meeting, with any remaining contingent  
12 agreements finalized prior to the May 7th filing deadline.

13           Our responsibility is to provide a complete and  
14 fully compliant packet application. We will ensure that  
15 every payroll obligation, union commitment, contractor  
16 payment, funding requirement, regulatory condition is  
17 satisfied before racing begins. We appreciate the Board's  
18 guidance and look forward to continuing this process  
19 together.

20           Thank you.

21           MR. TITUS: Good morning, everyone. Andy Titus,  
22 Humboldt County Fair.

23           You know, I think it's important to acknowledge  
24 also, I want to stay positive here with everything and, I  
25 mean, I know this is a very difficult decision for everyone.

1 We are not comparing ourselves to Del Mar or to Santa Anita.  
2 We understand, let's say they're the major leagues and we're  
3 the minor leagues. And I mean, I played sports for quite a  
4 while and father time is undefeated. So even if a horse is  
5 the caliber of running at Del Mar and Santa Anita right now,  
6 there's always going to be a spot for those horses to run.  
7 Those aren't the horses that we're targeting.

8           We do have a list of trainers with horses to  
9 bring. And a lot of those are horses that have actually  
10 been forced to leave the state because they couldn't compete  
11 at Santa Anita and Del Mar. And I mean, I feel like that's  
12 important also. I look at this as an opportunity instead  
13 of, with all the negative and everything else that's going  
14 on out there and jobs going away and things going away,  
15 let's take the opportunity to work together and to do  
16 something great and bring people back into the state, bring  
17 jobs back into the state.

18           I went to Santa Anita this morning, met with a  
19 handful of people that have come to Humboldt before. And  
20 I've only seen my family twice in the last year because I'm  
21 here, I'm there. I'm not able to be where my family's at  
22 because my family's still in Northern California.

23           I appreciate everybody that's got up and spoke and  
24 the things that they've said. But I guess some statistics  
25 here, and I mean, I'm sure you guys already know them, so I

1 don't want to -- I mean, we're looking at the Northern  
2 California trainers that have had to move down south on  
3 average are not doing very well at all. They're winning 10  
4 percent of their starts or 5 percent of their starts.

5           You know, we know we're talking about money here;  
6 right? And the purses that those people here would be  
7 losing, the \$20 million that's been coming to the South has  
8 been redirected, say it's \$1.2 million in purses that we  
9 would get, that \$1.2 million is going to go to people that  
10 it's not going to right now that are also California  
11 trainers and owners. And that helps them pay their staff  
12 that are in California that in turn pay taxes. We're  
13 creating jobs. We're making better opportunities.

14           So all we ask for right now is the opportunity,  
15 you know, to give us our dates, give us the potential. If  
16 you want to put other strings out there, other things that  
17 need to be met before we get our license in May, we look  
18 forward to working together with you guys to make that  
19 happen. But right now, we're trying to get our dates and  
20 look at the opportunity that we have to do something great  
21 and work together to benefit the industry and to expand the  
22 industry and not just focus on, you know, the single  
23 circuit, which I heard from most of those people isn't  
24 working.

25           So we're coming up with a solution that could

1 potentially benefit everyone and expand things instead of  
2 shrink it down and have more people leave. We're trying to  
3 bring people back in.

4 I appreciate your time. Thank you.

5 CHAIR FERRARO: Larry?

6 MR. SWARTZLANDER: Yeah, just a couple of  
7 historical comments and clarifications of what's going on in  
8 the hierarchy of northern racing.

9 Josh Rubenstein and Tom Robbins, I think you all  
10 know Tom Robbins, Director of Racing at Del Mar, we had a  
11 one-on-one meeting two years ago prior to the Golden State  
12 Racing application being heard and approved. And Josh was  
13 very frank. "Larry," he says, "don't run Golden State  
14 Racing, we'll support the fairs." So the seed was there.  
15 Josh understood what the fairs stood for, what they stood  
16 for of racing.

17 You know, and Eric talked about the tote contract.  
18 The Humboldt County still is a CARF member. We have signed  
19 contracts with the unions and with AmTote. Obviously, the  
20 lawyers need to review the contracts in light of this change  
21 as we move forward. And, you know, I'd be very confident  
22 that -- and I've spoken to all the key contractors, key  
23 personnel. You know, in my opinion, just like Fresno,  
24 Humboldt is a turnkey operation. Everything's in place. We  
25 just need to reactivate it and move forward.

1 CHAIR FERRARO: I see your fair is for two weeks,  
2 but you applied for four weeks of racing. Why?

3 MR. TITUS: From talking with horsemen and other  
4 partners, it's very difficult to travel for two weeks to not  
5 be able to get your horse to run multiple times by going a  
6 month. And we're going to have entertainment that whole  
7 time. If we're granted the dates, we will have  
8 entertainment all four weeks. We will have a fair-like  
9 atmosphere for four weeks. We just can't plan a fair for a  
10 month and not have the racing because that's a huge part of  
11 our admissions.

12 But for someone to come with the new guidelines  
13 with HISA and so on and so forth and be able to run their  
14 horses, they need to have the availability of the four weeks  
15 to get their horses entered adequately, you know, to justify  
16 bringing them all the way to Humboldt County.

17 MR. SWARTZLANDER: And Chairman, I'd just like to  
18 add too that in 2024, we had the four-week meet at Humboldt  
19 and it proved very profitable. We had a situation where we  
20 were \$275,000 underpaid in purses. You know, the net  
21 proceeds to the fair were in the \$200,000 to \$300,000 range.  
22 And it's better for the horsemen. They need a longer period  
23 of time to relocate and stay. (Loud background noise.)  
24 Somebody didn't like that comment. It's a situation where  
25 given more time -- and obviously with host status, you

1 continue to receive the ADW monies through that other two  
2 weeks.

3 We all know, and I'm sure that Bill Nader will  
4 agree with me that, you know, when we don't run,  
5 unfortunately we make money because we're still getting ADW  
6 host monies.

7 CHAIR FERRARO: Questions from the Board?

8 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: I just have a quick one for  
9 Mr. Titus.

10 Earlier, I mentioned the investment that the  
11 County of Humboldt made to retrofitting those grandstands.  
12 Could you just give me a little bit of context? Because I  
13 got a feeling that the county, like any other local  
14 government, when you make that kind of investment, you do so  
15 because it is publicly supported. You start to look down  
16 the road that this is a good investment. Could you just  
17 give a little bit of context about that investment and what  
18 that meant, and anything else?

19 MR. TITUS: No, we have a great relationship with  
20 the county. The county, through different programs, was  
21 able to come up with \$1 million to retrofit the grandstands  
22 after a major earthquake.

23 But we also, in a typical year, get, you know,  
24 \$200,000 to \$300,000 in sponsorship from the community when  
25 we have racing, which was down considerably last year

1 without horse racing. So our community loves it and our  
2 community is out to support it. And that's why I  
3 wholeheartedly can look you guys in the eye and I could  
4 shake your hand and say, if you give us the opportunity,  
5 because I know you can't get egg on your face again, we will  
6 not fail. Our community's behind us. We've got our  
7 political people behind us. We can make this work. We will  
8 be successful.

9 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Thank you. Thank you.

10 MR. TITUS: I wouldn't be here if I didn't  
11 wholeheartedly believe that. It's been two years and I'm  
12 still coming here. And I've been told no every time and I  
13 haven't quit because I know we can be successful. And I  
14 know that the Northern California horsemen need another  
15 opportunity to make some money.

16 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Thank you.

17 CHAIR FERRARO: Well, isn't that a fact that most  
18 of your horses come from Oregon though?

19 MR. TITUS: That's not an fact. Most of our  
20 horses? I mean, we do draw horses from Oregon. That is  
21 correct. But I think it would be false to say that most of  
22 our horses come from Oregon.

23 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay. All right.

24 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: You know, Andy, I just  
25 wanted to say thank you for that context. And I know there

1 are people in thoroughbred racing that understand the  
2 important contributions of thoroughbred racing to rural  
3 America, of which Humboldt, Ferndale is very much rural  
4 America.

5           Last year, HISA, together with the Breeders' Cup  
6 and some others, did a webinar. And for those who may not  
7 have heard or listened in on that, you ought to go back,  
8 because the powers that be within thoroughbred industry,  
9 that during that message, it was all about exactly what  
10 we're here talking about. It's about understanding what  
11 thoroughbred racing's contributions are.

12           And for those that are really wanting to -- how  
13 does racing get out of this rut? How do we make a political  
14 case for it? You don't do it with just L.A. or San Diego  
15 politicians. I'm going to tell you, if anybody's looking  
16 for a magic wand, keep looking. You do it with every single  
17 assembly member, every single state senator, with  
18 constitutional office holders saying racing and fairs and  
19 the investments that we want to make is good.

20           So the more that we start to pare things down, not  
21 only are we doing that against our own interests, but we're  
22 also doing it against our own political interests. And I do  
23 know there's a lot of elected officials from Tehama, from  
24 Humboldt, and probably the broader Northern California area,  
25 future politicians as well that are looking and listening

1 about how we are treating you. Because urban America's not  
2 always been fair to rural America. And I say that as a  
3 product of East Los Angeles, of urban America.

4 But I do believe that you're coming in good faith  
5 with your hand open and really wanting an opportunity once  
6 again, Andy. So I'm holding out hope that things are going  
7 to be a little bit better for this, you know, this  
8 particular vote. Thank you.

9 MR. SWARTZLANDER: Chairman, just one last  
10 comment. For those people who've been to Humboldt, you  
11 know, the social nightlife of the City of Ferndale, I just  
12 want to let everybody know that the Ivanhoe, which is the  
13 highlight of going to the Humboldt County Fair, has been  
14 reopened.

15 CHAIR FERRARO: Thanks very much.

16 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Mr. Chairman --

17 CHAIR FERRARO: Does TOC want to make a comment?

18 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: I had some comments -- or  
19 questions.

20 CHAIR FERRARO: Questions?

21 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Not comments.

22 CHAIR FERRARO: I'm sorry, Dennis.

23 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: It seems that in our  
24 reports, we've seen that, and you touched on it, the costs  
25 and things, you're trying to establish what those are. And

1 what -- your initial costs seem very low. And we're --  
2 our -- we're estimating that the fair for four weeks would  
3 cost \$3 million to \$4 million. Do you -- you're going to  
4 solidify those costs or what? I mean, I'm concerned that we  
5 don't know. And especially, you know, you've got your  
6 staff, Teamsters and things. I think there's a Teamsters  
7 representative here in the audience. I'd love to hear from  
8 him if he's had any dialogue with you all. Because that's  
9 the most important thing; right? That we can run and  
10 operate a fair; right? Or the racing part of it.

11 Two party -- the he third part question here is, I  
12 understand that there was consideration of a joint powers  
13 authority between Alameda and you all and, of course,  
14 Tehama. Where -- what happened there? Did it fall apart  
15 because of Alameda pulling out or --

16 MS. KENNY: If it's okay, I'll start with the  
17 first portion.

18 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Sorry, I've loaded you up  
19 here.

20 MS. KENNY: No, no, no, it's okay.

21 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: I apologize.

22 MS. KENNY: I may need a refresh.

23 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: I just get it all out  
24 there.

25 MS. KENNY: I'm glad you did though. So with

1 regards to the estimates, you know, we do acknowledge that  
2 we're basing those estimates off of 2024, which was for a  
3 three-week in-person period. And it also had CARF's  
4 involvement as far as the billback component. So fleshing  
5 out those details with regards to those expenses, it is  
6 absolutely in the works. We also have a pro forma available  
7 from our director of racing for the cost of 2026 racing.

8           And then the JPA, thank you, and so with regards  
9 to the JPA, that is still a conversation, you know, in the  
10 works. But it's definitely not something that could be  
11 finalized in this time period before this meeting. There is  
12 some strong support for it between the counties. And we are  
13 very hopeful that for future racing circuits, that that's  
14 going to be a possibility.

15           CHAIR FERRARO: But you need CDFA approval for  
16 that, do you not?

17           MS. KENNY: I'm sorry?

18           CHAIR FERRARO: Do you need CDFA approval for  
19 that?

20           MS. KENNY: For the Joint Powers Authority?

21           VICE CHAIR GONZALES: No. The answer is no. This  
22 would be county to county to county.

23           EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: But if it includes --

24           MS. KENNY: Thank you for that.

25           EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: -- if it includes DAA,

1 you wouldn't need CDFA to the extent that that includes the  
2 DAA.

3 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: I think that needs to be  
4 looked at. I don't know if you're accurate there, Scott.

5 MR. SWARTZLANDER: Yeah, it's --

6 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: I think --

7 MR. SWARTZLANDER: -- it's certainly, you know, we  
8 always coordinate with CDFA, but it doesn't require any  
9 direct approval.

10 Well, let me talk a little bit about joint powers.  
11 I was in on the beginning of joint powers. And the  
12 situation was that the fairs, running seven, eight different  
13 fairs, we could never carry, you know, jackpots over. And  
14 when you don't carry a jackpot over, you'd like to get it  
15 up, say, \$1 million, \$2 million. It increases your handle  
16 dramatically.

17 And what we did several years ago was CARF came  
18 forward, and we didn't have a consolidated purse fund and we  
19 didn't have any of that at that time. We went to the Board  
20 and requested it. And with CDFA's approval, you do need  
21 CDFA approvals for the CARF, that we would go ahead and  
22 allow us to carry over these jackpots.

23 Now, the concern that came up, it was well-voiced  
24 by the Stronach Group at that time, was that they didn't  
25 want the fairs joining to be one powerful organization. So

1 the caveat was put into this motion every year since then,  
2 and this started 15 years ago, that we only asked to carry  
3 over pools. We didn't ask for anything else.

4           The actual purse consolidation fund was actually a  
5 CARF thing. CARF ran the bank, and it was just a matter of  
6 moving money from fair to fair to fair so that one fair, for  
7 example -- you know, Pleasanton is always overpaid, always.  
8 Humboldt is always underpaid. So it gave you the  
9 opportunity now for the fairs, that they didn't have to pay  
10 at the end of the year, they didn't have to put anything in.  
11 It was all handled in that capacity.

12           Now that we've resurfaced now as separate  
13 entities, yes, you can't consolidate the purse by law. You  
14 can't do it. So everyone has to be able to support  
15 themselves.

16           With the counties coming involved, you're setting  
17 up a separate JPA. And I won't go into whatever a JPA is.  
18 Twenty-six years, I still couldn't tell you what it is  
19 exactly. It's just, it allows the organizations to speak as  
20 one. So if we end up having five fairs, now someone, me or  
21 someone, come in front of me and say, I'm the executive  
22 director of the new joint powers organization, and now we  
23 do, by law, have the authority to consolidate purses and  
24 commissions, et cetera.

25           So that's sort of the background of a JPA. What

1 we're trying to do now is at the county level, not at CARF.

2 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Well, it didn't work for  
3 CARF, obviously. But maybe there's ways to --

4 MR. SWARTZLANDER: It worked all right, sir, for  
5 the consolidated purse item.

6 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Okay.

7 MR. SWARTZLANDER: And it worked for the jackpots.  
8 That's as far as we took it.

9 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Okay. I mean, maybe it's  
10 something for 2027. I'm not sure. But you may be able to  
11 modify those agreements and spread not only the --

12 MR. SWARTZLANDER: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: -- not only the risk, but  
14 the costs and things.

15 MR. SWARTZLANDER: Yeah, you want to make it a  
16 more operational JPA, that we're all working together out of  
17 the same pot of money.

18 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay. Thanks. Let's hear from  
19 TOC and CTT, please, comments.

20 Do we have public comments? Same old group, same  
21 old complaints.

22 MR. NADER: Chairman, I'll go first, I guess. In  
23 2025, the consolidation to a single circuit resulted in  
24 overnight purses increasing at Santa Anita, Del Mar, and Los  
25 Alamitos. Purse overpayments have been greatly reduced or

1 completely wiped out. Field sizes increased to 7.8 horses  
2 per race across the three California racetracks in 2025,  
3 which was considerably higher than the prior year. And while  
4 2025 provided some optimism, we still remain in rebuilding  
5 mode with much, much more work to do.

6 Our jobs, purses, owners, trainers, jockeys, and  
7 backstretch workers are united in a hope for a sustainable  
8 future. So when we say rebuilding mode, we're doing that by  
9 using our limited resources to increase purses, reducing the  
10 gap between California and the states that have a  
11 competitive advantage, trying to make our industry stronger  
12 and eventually reach a point where we can consider  
13 expansion.

14 We know that California racing is fighting  
15 desperately to maintain its position as a major player, an  
16 industry leader, and we are fighting that fight without the  
17 benefit of ancillary revenue that other states enjoy. We  
18 know that California is operating at a competitive  
19 disadvantage. We know that the single circuit is working.  
20 And with all that, we would welcome the return of racing in  
21 the North, but it must be at a time when there is sufficient  
22 horse population and a business model that brings added  
23 value to California racing as a whole.

24 So the licensing of these dates would result in  
25 purse reductions for those who are truly supporting

1 California racing. We know that our purse structure is  
2 below New York, Kentucky, Arkansas, and others. We know  
3 that our horse owners, trainers, jockeys, backstretch  
4 workers, frontside workers, everyone that is part of the  
5 value chain, they are collectively hoping that their 52-  
6 week-a-year commitment to California racing is recognized  
7 when decisions like this are made.

8 Now, let's just take a moment and look back to  
9 page nine of the Bernal Park Business Plan that was  
10 presented to you at last month's CHRB meeting. Now, again,  
11 I'm going to go to the numbers, but I need to.

12 The headline of that page was Confirmed Trainers  
13 In Support of Fair Racing in the North, with 29 trainers  
14 listed.

15 Now, taking a closer look to see what that looked  
16 like for Humboldt, in 2024, when horse population was at its  
17 absolute peak in the North, 14 of those 29 trainers did not  
18 run a horse at the Humboldt County Fair. This is what Andy  
19 Mathis, and I didn't know what Andy was going to say, but  
20 this is what he was referring to earlier. So 14 out of the  
21 29 did not run a single horse. Three others ran one horse  
22 each. The California-based support was not there in 2024  
23 when horse population was at its peak. It would be much  
24 worse this year when horse population is non-existent.

25 The request this year to expand to 12 days, well,

1 that's a stretch for us. For decades, Humboldt County Fair  
2 ran two weeks of racing and it always struggled with small  
3 field sizes and extremely limited participation from  
4 California-based horses. So when we talk about Cal-breds  
5 and the percentage of Cal-breds that run in California and  
6 what this would mean for Cal-breds, whether it be Tehama or  
7 Humboldt, it would mean very, very little. If it means the  
8 trade-off is going to be to reduce purses in the South to  
9 provide these limited opportunities, I'll again go to the  
10 numbers.

11 In 2024, the average number of thoroughbred horses  
12 per race day at Humboldt was only 37, and only half of which  
13 were from California. So there really is no upside.  
14 Average handled per day was \$444,000, meaning that the money  
15 wagered on their own racing product was the lowest in the  
16 nation for the month of August. So by any measure, the key  
17 metrics are statistically insignificant.

18 So the trade-off proposal before us today in our  
19 zero-sum game, we allocate race dates to Humboldt County  
20 Fair, the majority of which, when the fair is not in  
21 operation, although they would have expanded entertainment,  
22 we do this to help Humboldt County to support a tiny portion  
23 of the California horse population, a tiny portion of Cal-  
24 breds that are competing at a very low level. Again, only  
25 37 horses per day, and that included the horses that had

1 shipped in from Oregon or Washington. And we do this at the  
2 expense of industry participants contributing 52 weeks a  
3 year with our California captive horse population, horses  
4 that are with us week in and week out.

5           The trade-off goes further. The free reciprocal  
6 exchange of simulcast signals between north and south, which  
7 once included Bay Meadows and Golden Gate, well, it had  
8 enough meat on the bone to pass the equity test, but it  
9 would now be reduced to one straight-up trade at no cost to  
10 either party, Ferndale for Del Mar, free exchange of  
11 content.

12           Allocating race dates to a fair like Humboldt  
13 really adds no value to the California racing and breeding  
14 industries. Every four weeks of race dates granted to a  
15 fair in the North takes away over \$2 million that would  
16 otherwise benefit the California racing industry, where the  
17 owners, trainers, jockeys, backstretch workers, and the  
18 history and tradition of California racing is fighting for  
19 its future. Our limited resources must be directed to their  
20 best use. We know there are not -- there's not a lot of  
21 cookies in the cookie jar.

22           Vice Chairman Gonzales highlighted this point on a  
23 couple of occasions when he questioned the purse of the  
24 Santa Anita Derby, which he believed, rightfully so, that it  
25 was too low for a premier three-year-old race in the state

1 of California. Well, we learned a lesson with the Golden  
2 State Racing experiment at Pleasanton. It's a good example  
3 of where \$6 million was used to take a chance, a chance that  
4 we agreed to. As a result, this is a contributing reason  
5 why the Santa Anita Derby purse remains at the low end of  
6 the major three-year-old race scale leading to the Triple  
7 Crown and why millions of dollars had to be cut from the  
8 California stakes program.

9 In closing, we need to be exceptionally careful  
10 about the allocation of race dates and our limited  
11 resources. A lot of people and a lot of jobs are fully  
12 committed to California, hoping they have a future.

13 For all of these reasons, we have no choice but to  
14 oppose the Humboldt County Fair race date application.

15 CHAIR FERRARO: CTT?

16 MR. SADLER: We're the same. We oppose this  
17 application. Bill did a beautiful presentation there. The  
18 numbers are spot on.

19 And I think to reflect on what Andy Mathis said,  
20 you know, he trained -- he's been training up north a long  
21 time. He never went up there. I trained in Northern  
22 California in 1979. Guys weren't going up to Ferndale then.

23 So, you know, is it helping California trainers?  
24 Ferndale, not really. Those horses that come in from Oregon  
25 or Washington or something like that. So this just doesn't

1 make any sense at this time. Obviously, we're sympathetic,  
2 but we would be opposed to this.

3 MR. BALCH: Alan Balch, CTT. I was reflecting on  
4 this the last couple of days.

5 I went to work for CTT 15, 16 years ago. I've  
6 been in front of this Board on the Humboldt application  
7 going way, way back. And it's always been problematic for  
8 us. CTT, as an organization, has opposed Humboldt County  
9 repeatedly because we believe the charge of the Racing Board  
10 is to stimulate live racing.

11 And what's happened, as a matter just of fact, is  
12 that as ADW has developed over the last 15 years, the money,  
13 and it does come down to money for everybody, the money is  
14 flowing to Ferndale, as many of you Commissioners have heard  
15 at past meetings, to keep the fair alive and to keep, you  
16 know, Humboldt County prosperous, which is a laudable goal.

17 But racing has to be putting racing first. That's  
18 our belief, that the Racing Board should be doing everything  
19 it can to stimulate live racing in California for California  
20 horses, trainers, and owners. And over the last 15, 16  
21 years, I don't believe you can cite one time, unfortunately,  
22 where the numbers at Ferndale of California participation  
23 have been robust. And that's despite a lot of effort by  
24 many people to stimulate owners, trainers, horses to go up  
25 there.

1           The sad fact of the matter is that it's become a  
2 meeting for largely Oregon, Idaho, Washington, and other  
3 horses. And mostly because when it runs during Del Mar and  
4 Saratoga, that's where the money comes from, from the ADW  
5 handle with Ferndale, Humboldt County operating. That's a  
6 sad fact, but Mr. Nader's numbers are spot on. And as John  
7 said, we cannot support the application at this time.

8           CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

9           Questions from the Board? Comments?

10          VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Yeah, just a real brief one.

11          Mr. Balch, you've been to Ferndale during their  
12 racing, their fair racing, I'm assuming.

13          MR. BALCH: I have. As a commissioner, as  
14 Chairman Colley (phonetic), who I go way, way back with,  
15 used to call it, the Santa Anita of the North.

16          VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Right. And just want to  
17 share any thoughts what your experience was like, how  
18 important it is to that area and (indiscernible)?

19          MR. BALCH: Absolutely. It's great. And when I  
20 first had experience with Northern California back in the  
21 '80s, one of the most stimulating things was to be in a fair  
22 atmosphere --

23          VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Yeah.

24          MR. BALCH: -- with a grandstand full and people  
25 loving the racing. There's no question about that. But of

1 course, in those days, we had 12 races. We had mules. We  
2 had Quarter Horses. We had Appaloosas. We had all kinds of  
3 things. The game has changed so much as far as racing goes,  
4 as far as racing goes. And unfortunately, that's a sad  
5 fact.

6 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Thank you for sharing that,  
7 Alan. I've been up there myself a couple of times and  
8 experienced exactly what you did. And not everything in  
9 life, not everything in politics or business, is reflected  
10 on a ledger. You know, there's a lot that goes on in and  
11 around fairs and racing that is just hard to quantify.

12 And I believe fair racing is exactly that. It  
13 brings families together. It keeps the old timers just  
14 looking forward to one more year. It's allowing for people  
15 to test out their recipes and bring their Sunday best.

16 And I just think, unfortunately, you know, horse  
17 racing, like other industries, all they're looking at is the  
18 ledger. And I think that we as appointees have to realize  
19 what the overall mission is and not just look at the same  
20 ledger that you guys are looking at, because I believe we  
21 have a responsibility to communities, especially communities  
22 that get left out as rural areas do.

23 But I appreciate your leadership, as I do Mr.  
24 Sadler's and Mr. Nader's on this, so thanks.

25 CHAIR FERRARO: Anyone else on the Board, a

1 comment?

2 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.

3 So all three of you, I guess the question just to  
4 play devil's advocate, so everybody's talking about the  
5 horse population, how do we get that to increase? How does  
6 the horse population, how do we get that to increase? So  
7 we're not having this conversation anymore, just in general?

8 MR. SADLER: Well, it's pretty simple. If you  
9 look at like the Breeders' Cup card at Del Mar and where  
10 they jack up the purses, I don't know whether it's from  
11 Breeders' Cup or the association, you have an allowance race  
12 at Del Mar on the undercard of the Breeders' Cup, it was  
13 \$125,000 -- it was actually \$150,000, full field, you know?  
14 So if the purses are up, then we can draw from other  
15 jurisdictions.

16 You know, California is -- I just want to make a  
17 little statement. California is a great place to race  
18 horses. This is how I sell it. We have consistent weather.  
19 We've got year-round turf racing. And if our purses are  
20 good, horses will come in from other regions. Owners will  
21 start wanting to. It's high cost here. You know, that's  
22 just California. You don't need to be in horse racing to  
23 know that. Rent an apartment or whatever. But if the  
24 purses are up, the horses will come and the people will  
25 follow.

1 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: Thank you for that.

2 Also, my other question is, at the end of the day,  
3 if this were to go through, you did mention, both parties  
4 mentioned that you do not support giving them the dates.  
5 But would you do an agreement with them if it changes at  
6 all, at any time? Let's say, you know, today, if it  
7 changes, would you guys consider giving them some type of  
8 agreement?

9 MR. NADER: Look, I think the -- if I can take  
10 first crack at that. I think what John referred to, you  
11 know, when I talked about the consolidation, it was a  
12 downward spiral. You remember when we finished 2024, we  
13 were on a downward spiral, both in the North and in the  
14 South, where purses were coming down. Maiden special weight  
15 races, for example, were \$54,000. Today, now at Santa  
16 Anita, it's \$70,000. At Del Mar, it's \$80,000. Money makes  
17 the mare run. That's the old expression.

18 So what John is alluding to, so I think in the  
19 rebuilding mode, if we can get purses up, we can get field  
20 sizes up, because we also have to look at the quality of our  
21 racing and how that drives handle, not only in California,  
22 but across the country. Our only source of income in  
23 California is parimutuel wagering on horse racing, so if we  
24 can make our racing better from a quality standpoint with  
25 bigger field sizes, bigger purses, better racing.

1 John mentioned turf racing. We're very fortunate  
2 in California that we do have a climate that gives us that  
3 advantage, but the disadvantages are real. And this ability  
4 to compete, if we can continue the rebuilding mode and  
5 slowly and steadily get stronger, then I think, as I said in  
6 my remarks, we're in a point where we can consider expansion  
7 and have those kind of conversations.

8 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: So at this time,  
9 though, you're not in agreement at giving them any type of  
10 agreement for these dates?

11 MR. SADLER: Nothing for the time being, but --

12 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: Yes.

13 MR. SADLER: -- you know, we would look at  
14 something in the future.

15 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: So then I pose the  
16 question again, are they able to run without a TOC or CTT  
17 agreement, Mr. Chaney?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: No, the response is  
19 the same. You need, statutorily, a TOC and a CTT agreement.  
20 So if they submit an application, we have a regulation that  
21 allows us, without a TOC or CTT agreement, we have a  
22 regulation that allows the Board to hold a hearing, which I  
23 assume would be done at the same time as the Board meeting  
24 probably. And the Board then determines, similar to what  
25 they did with the CTT and the sort of removal process, would

1 assign both agreements, if you will.

2 Again, I just want to be clear that CTT is a  
3 little bit simpler because it's more about procedure and so  
4 on. The TOC would be a major bear because, you know, purse  
5 structure and things like that are part of the TOC  
6 agreement.

7 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: If I can just elaborate on  
8 that, Commissioner Castellanos, we have done it before  
9 because of the impasse that happens. So we would -- again,  
10 this is just allocation here.

11 So I think really what we have to do is allow for  
12 Humboldt to come in and cross some T's and dots the I. They  
13 still will have to come back for their race meet  
14 application, their race meet agreement approval. There's a  
15 two-step process here. And at that time, we would just put  
16 it on the agenda, which we have done before. And I think  
17 you're asking the right questions, Commissioner. But, yeah,  
18 we have the ability to encourage the parties to come up with  
19 an agreement so that racing can happen. It's been done  
20 before.

21 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: I thank you for that,  
22 Co-Chair. I'm just asking because at the end of the day, as  
23 I asked TOC and CTT, is that would they give them agreement  
24 at this time? And they're saying no.

25 So I understand what you're saying. I know all

1 the processes. I just wanted to kind of put it out there if  
2 they were to do that.

3 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Understood.

4 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: Like we did last time.  
5 I mean, let's not -- you know, I'm not going to shy away  
6 from it.

7 I was in support of Larry and GSR. I supported  
8 them. You remember, Bill, I did everything but hang you  
9 over a balcony. So, I mean, you know, we tried to do  
10 everything that we could to make this happen. And we  
11 encouraged everybody to support it because of the momentum  
12 that we had when Golden Gate, you know, shut down, so we  
13 wanted to keep that momentum and move forward.

14 This is a different situation. And I totally  
15 understand. Just, I've said it before, and I'll say it  
16 again. My oath is that for the support and the  
17 responsibility of the state of California and this industry  
18 and to be honest and transparent with everybody in this room  
19 and everybody listening. So that's where I'm at. That's  
20 why I'm asking the question is there, you know, is there  
21 anything that can be done?

22 And I understand, Oscar. I do understand the  
23 concern and I do understand the responsibilities and how the  
24 process works. That's why I was kind of asking that  
25 question. So thank you that -- thank you for that.

1 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: I just --

2 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: I'll make a comment about,  
3 you know, we're finally doing so well in the South.

4 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: So well?

5 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: We are, but it's fringing  
6 on in the South, so --

7 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: But please continue.  
8 I'll --

9 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: But it's fragile; right?  
10 It could break like an egg; right? And so I am still not  
11 convinced that granting race dates at this time is  
12 appropriate or smart. My belief, it's not the time to  
13 experiment. That's what this is. It's an experiment.  
14 We're starting all over from scratch.

15 The fairs are going to do well. Mom and apple pie  
16 and grandma, they're all going to still come. The fairs are  
17 open and live. It's just the racing part of it that's not  
18 open; right?

19 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Well --

20 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: So this is high risk. As  
21 Bill Nader said earlier, it's a zero-sum game. This is  
22 not -- in its present form, it's destined to fail.

23 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: No, you're wrong.

24 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: And, well, that's my  
25 belief.

1 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Okay, you know, yeah.

2 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: And so, you know, I will be  
3 voting no on this.

4 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: But that's fine, Mr.  
5 Alfieri. I mean, just, you're making some very, very  
6 profound comments that I think need some responding to. And  
7 you're showing your urban bonafides here.

8 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay, gentlemen.

9 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- big time.

10 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay. Thank you.

11 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: And you're showing just --

12 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: I'm trying to save --

13 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- how one-sided you are.

14 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: I'm --

15 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: But it is my -- but hold on  
16 here.

17 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Well, go ahead.

18 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: What you said last year,  
19 Dennis --

20 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Go ahead.

21 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- was you said, let's take  
22 a year off. What you keep doing is you keep moving the  
23 goalposts. They took a year off. Have you one time --

24 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Well, I've seen nothing in  
25 a year --

1 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Well, but have --

2 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: -- Oscar.

3 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- have you yourself offered  
4 to convene a meeting? Have you walked yourself up --

5 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: I've never had one phone  
6 call from anyone from the North.

7 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Well, because look at --

8 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: So they --

9 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- because look at your  
10 demeanor. Look at where you're at.

11 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: So I have to put myself out  
12 to call them?

13 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: No, I think you just have to  
14 show a little bit of open-mindedness here, Dennis.

15 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: You and I have talked about  
16 this.

17 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: That's all you have to do,  
18 Dennis.

19 CHAIR FERRARO: Yeah, no.

20 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: This is not an experiment.

21 CHAIR FERRARO: Let's --

22 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Things are not going to  
23 fail.

24 CHAIR FERRARO: -- let's go to public comment and  
25 we'll (indiscernible).

1 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: We're talking a very small  
2 fair that has proven over and over again that it can run --

3 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay, Oscar.

4 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- a race meet up in  
5 Humboldt.

6 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: I am worried --

7 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay, gentlemen.

8 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: -- I am worried about the  
9 racetracks in one circuit here in California --

10 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Well --

11 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: -- in the South.

12 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- then let me make a final  
13 comment. If you're talking that if you're --

14 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: If they close, we're done  
15 here.

16 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- if you're saying that the  
17 one circuit is a resounding success, which is what you're  
18 saying, you're wrong. You need to go back there and get  
19 your shoes a little bit dirty on the backstretch and talk to  
20 people because four or five horse fields --

21 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: I have.

22 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: I've been.

23 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: I mean, it's just not  
24 working.

25 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: If I could just make one

1 comment --

2 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Horses have left --

3 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: -- about this.

4 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- but they still have their  
5 \$20 million. They never did a Thursday card like they  
6 promised. They never compensated for shipping and taking  
7 care of grooms. I mean, Dennis, you're close to these guys.  
8 Why didn't you put pressure on them --

9 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay.

10 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- to make things work?

11 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay. Okay, gentlemen.

12 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: That's all I'm saying,  
13 Dennis.

14 CHAIR FERRARO: Commissioner Davis has a comment  
15 she'd like to make.

16 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: I will appreciate your vote,  
17 but when you make comments, Dennis, you've got to stand by.

18 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: One year I have not heard  
19 anyone --

20 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: -- from the North.

22 CHAIR FERRARO: Go ahead.

23 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: -- I would just say.

24 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: That's fine.

25 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: I just want to say, I

1 understand the impetus for consolidating and not dragging  
2 everybody down by compromising purse sizes and field sizes,  
3 the things that make people excited about betting on the  
4 races and participating in the sport.

5 I just wonder if excluding the North from all  
6 conversations about how to work together to get HSR  
7 implemented in this state is a wise move. And I think every  
8 time the Southern California Circuit takes a position that  
9 they don't want the North racing, and I understand the  
10 reasons that they're giving, puts us farther from that  
11 Northern element that could help with getting HSR. And  
12 frankly, my concern, it's fragile in the South because we  
13 don't have the subsidy. And I think the South would go down  
14 anyway, at some point, the way things are heading.

15 So it would just make more sense to me, instead of  
16 hounding on the fact that it's a zero-sum game, to say,  
17 let's give the North something and work, put that pressure  
18 on ourselves to work harder to get the HSR that you all know  
19 we're going to have to have to keep racing healthy in  
20 California.

21 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

22 Okay, we're going to have public comment, but I  
23 see we have the same women up here. And while I respect  
24 your opinions about horse racing, we've heard you twice now  
25 this morning. And so I'm going to ask you to confine your

1 comments to why we should not allow racing dates or should  
2 allow racing dates at Humboldt. If you don't confine it to  
3 that subject, I'll ask you to sit down and let somebody else  
4 speak. We're running out of time. People have planes to  
5 catch and places to go.

6 So we'll start with Lynn.

7 LYNN: First of all, Humboldt County plans to use  
8 the same racing association veterinarians as the Tehama  
9 District Fair, Drs. Clifton and Burke. The qualification  
10 and oversight concerns I raised during my Tehama application  
11 and public comment apply equally here as well.

12 Second, the safety record at Ferndale is deeply  
13 troubling. Following the September 2024 meet at the  
14 Humboldt County Fair, two horses, Arctic Fire, 6 years old,  
15 and Visual Display, 12 years old, were euthanized after  
16 catastrophic musculoskeletal injuries sustained during  
17 racing. That brought the total number of horse deaths in  
18 Ferndale to 24 since 1994.

19 According to the Jockey Club Equine Injury  
20 Database, the national average for racing-related fatalities  
21 is 1.32 per 1,000 starts. Ferndale's fatality rate exceeds  
22 five times that figure. That is not a marginal deviation.  
23 That is a systemic red flag.

24 At the September 19th, 2024, Board meeting, Dr.  
25 Ferraro emphasized the need for improved horse welfare in

1 light of the recent fatalities. He remarked that the injury  
2 rate at the fairs had been unacceptably high this year.

3 Quote,

4 "The injury rate at the fairs, unfortunately, in my  
5 opinion, has been too high this year. A lot of reasons  
6 for it, but a 12-year-old horse that breaks down at  
7 Ferndale does not do racing any good. So if you're  
8 going to go forward as an institution of racing, you  
9 need to have this welfare of horses front and center  
10 because the continued rate in which you're losing  
11 horses is not acceptable to the sport," says you, Dr.  
12 Ferraro.

13 Once again, you indicate that the new regulations  
14 will limit the eligibility of older horses to race, with  
15 those over 10 years old no longer permitted.

16 The death of Arctic Fire was not addressed during  
17 the meeting. Speculation arose that Ferndale may have  
18 violated CHRB's inclement weather policy by permitting races  
19 on the day at 24 hours after Humboldt County received over  
20 an inch of rain, which broke a 27-year-old rainfall record.

21 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

22 Klara?

23 KLARA: This meeting packet is outdated and out of  
24 touch. Basically, a list of simulcast locations are listed  
25 in the Humboldt package, but they are not included on the

1 official list of CHRB satellite facilities. Under Item 12C,  
2 Simulcast Waging Program, this application lists the  
3 following facilities for a Humboldt, Sacramento Cal Expo,  
4 Chalamar Sports Center, Alpine Watch and Wager, Lakeside  
5 Simulcast, and Fantasy Springs Casino, and there are more.  
6 These facilities are not listed on the official California  
7 Horse Racing Board website as approved CHRB Simulcast  
8 wagering sites.

9           How is that acceptable? Cal Expo clearly  
10 maintains an active, current Simulcast calendar while not  
11 being on the CHRB list. The public-facing regulatory  
12 information does not match what is presented in this  
13 application. It's not a minor error. It signals  
14 carelessness and misrepresentation.

15           Horse racing to Humboldt is the reintroduction of  
16 animal exploitation and dead horses, and nostalgia is not an  
17 excuse for animal exploitation and dead horses.

18           CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

19           Jamie?

20           JAMIE: Thank you. These are the reasons that I  
21 disagree and ask you not to put through the Humboldt County  
22 Fair approval.

23           First, I'm going to talk about Arctic Fire. It  
24 was a six-year-old bay mare born in Oregon, ran several  
25 cheapo fairs between Oregon and California. August 23,

1 2024, opening day at the Humboldt County Fair, this was also  
2 her last day alive. She was entered into a \$5,000 claimer  
3 considered the bottom of the barrel for racing. The  
4 announcer stated, "Blowing the turn at the tail end of the  
5 field is Arctic Fire." She blew the turn because she  
6 suffered a catastrophic injury. She broke her ankle and was  
7 killed.

8 Visual display, the second horse, was a 12-year-  
9 old sorrel gelding, born in Utah, made the rounds at all the  
10 crappy fairs in the state. In between, he was also  
11 trafficked to Los Alamitos and ultimately Ferndale. For  
12 reasons unknown, the horse was on hiatus from 2017 to 2024,  
13 not raced for seven years.

14 But that didn't stop Ferndale. Desperate to fill  
15 up their starting gate, on September 1st, 2024, he was  
16 entered to run in a 220-yard dash. He placed last after  
17 rupturing his hamstring, earning his tormentors \$665. He  
18 was then killed.

19 Rest in peace, Visual Display and Arctic Fire.  
20 Only in death are they free from this profit machine. Do  
21 not forget about these horses who lost their lives at the  
22 Humboldt County Fair.

23 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

24 Phoenix?

25 PHOENIX: Hi again. I'd like to talk about some

1 of the horses from Humboldt County Fair's last day of  
2 racing, September 8th, 2024.

3 Race one, Molly Bumarsha (phonetic). Two career  
4 starts. Raced once at Ferndale, then dumped at Grants Pass  
5 a month later. Both times placed last. Where is she now?

6 Race two, Ray of the Sea. Last seen at Grants  
7 Pass, October 2024. Where is he now?

8 Race four, Monsieur. Placed last. Chart stated,  
9 "Came under heavy pressure, but did not respond. Had little  
10 to offer, then faded." Translation, the horse was beaten  
11 heartlessly, but refused to go faster. He was last seen in  
12 2024. Where is he now?

13 Race six, Mighty Ruler. Placed last. Described  
14 as "hopelessly behind." That was his last entry on  
15 Equibase, and he had no workouts for the last 60 days.  
16 Where is he now?

17 Race seven, Corazon de Lucia. Placed last. He  
18 was dumped at Grants Pass a month later. Again, where is he  
19 now?

20 This bloody industry cannot keep track of its  
21 horses. Thousands of enslaved horses end up in the  
22 slaughter pipeline every single year. That is not love or  
23 horsemanship. It's animal cruelty and speciesism on full  
24 display.

25 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

1 Oscar? No?

2 Sandra?

3 SANDRA: Hello. Equibase is a treasure trove of  
4 information on the horses enslaved in the racing industry.  
5 When looking up the top performing horses of Ferndale,  
6 sadly, the typical traffic pattern emerges.

7 Mucino (phonetic) started out at the top tier  
8 tracks. He finally broke his maiden in his 13th start, but  
9 that wasn't good enough. He dropped in class and found  
10 himself at the Northern fairs, a known dumping ground for  
11 horses who can no longer perform in the Southern tracks.  
12 Where is Mucino now?

13 Equibase now has clocked workouts for him at the  
14 bottom of the barrel tracks, Sam Houston and Louisiana  
15 Downs. How much longer will this poor horse survive at  
16 these hell holes before he is killed or winds up at a  
17 feedlot or a holding pen?

18 Granting this license is granting a license to  
19 exploit, injure, traffic, and kill horses.

20 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

21 Ellis Davis?

22 MS. DAVIS: Thank you. I've been fortunate to  
23 work for the *Daily Racing Forum* and Equibase charting races  
24 for 45 years in California, and I'm hopeful that horse  
25 racing will resume in Northern California.

1           Since the closure of Golden Gate Fields, and later  
2 Pleasanton in 2024, North Cal stables have certainly  
3 struggled to find their footing at Santa Anita, Del Mar, and  
4 Los Alamitos. They suffered massive earnings declines in  
5 2025, and numerous trainers have retired or disbanded their  
6 stables entirely, with many thoroughbred shipping out of  
7 California.

8           North Cal trainers won a rate of 11.8 and 10  
9 percent of the races during the three Santa Anita meets last  
10 year. Those percentages fell to 5.5 and 6.7 percent at Del  
11 Mar. They won just eight percent of starts at the combined  
12 trio of 2025 Los Alamitos, and Northern Cal trainers have  
13 only won seven percent of their starts this year through  
14 February 15th at Santa Anita. Class relief is needed, and a  
15 four-week meet at Ferndale would certainly help those  
16 trainers and owners get some economic relief.

17           Ferndale has been one of the most popular stops in  
18 the North Cal circuit. I can vouch for it. I've been going  
19 up there since 1980, when David Bernstein, in fact, from  
20 down here in Southern California, sent a horse up, called  
21 Press Notice, to win the Humboldt County Marathon. And I've  
22 seen crowds of 6,000 on the weekends pack the place. Pretty  
23 impressive for a town of 1,700.

24           I'm confident there would be a large enough  
25 inventory of race-ready horses from regular sources, like

1 Gary Greiner, who's on hand here. He's been coming up to  
2 Ferndale for 50 years, God bless him. And also, coupled  
3 with new trainers who've had a little success down here in  
4 Southern California have indicated to me they'd come up to  
5 Ferndale and run. And then also the out-of-state runners,  
6 which have forged a big part in our inventory.

7 Ferndale has staged racing in the Redwoods for 128  
8 years, and I certainly hope it can continue and we can have  
9 Northern California keep its foot in the door in the future.

10 Thanks very much.

11 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you. Terry Lavoisier, did I  
12 get that right?

13 MR. LOVINGIER: Lovingier.

14 CHAIR FERRARO: Lovingier?

15 MR. LOVINGIER: Yeah.

16 CHAIR FERRARO: Oh, yeah, okay. I can't read.

17 MR. LOVINGIER: I'm Terry Lovinger. I sit on the  
18 TOC and the CTBA. I'm here as Terry Lovingier,  
19 breeder/owner, talking to you, representing my views.

20 So a year ago, a year and a half ago, I put out a  
21 pie chart, and I showed everybody what was going to happen  
22 with breeders' awards. And I'm here to clear up a few  
23 misrepresentations here.

24 If you give these dates, we're going to have less  
25 breeders' awards. We're better off as breeders if you don't

1 do these dates. Earlier, Oscar was talking, and the truth  
2 is in 2025, our breeders' awards went up. They went like  
3 this. So we went up an extra three percent or four percent  
4 in 2025. And the thought process that giving these few  
5 weeks to Humboldt are going to make people breed more, I  
6 would submit to you, it's going to make them breed less  
7 because they're going to make less.

8           We're a purse-driven industry. And breeders'  
9 awards are derived off of those purses. So by giving these  
10 dates, you're going to lower to everybody what they're going  
11 to get.

12           And there's quite a few other things. There's a  
13 real battle right now for horses across the nation. And I  
14 would see that they'd have real trouble trying to fill these  
15 races up there. Even Wyoming's going to -- Wyoming is going  
16 like this right now too. And those horses may get taken up  
17 and go to Wyoming.

18           So I just submit to you that I don't, I can't,  
19 support this. I've always felt like I always had a  
20 fiduciary responsibility to owners, to breeders, to  
21 trainers, all the stakeholders. We have a fiduciary  
22 responsibility to horses too. And the truth is I can't  
23 support this.

24           I'll take any questions if anyone wants to --

25           VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Yeah, Terry, you said

1 breeders' awards are going up, but you do know breeding  
2 itself is going down.

3 MR. LOVINGIER: It does --

4 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Actually, that's all I want  
5 to hear. Breeding, that's my point I was saying.

6 MR. LOVINGIER: It's going down, but the quality  
7 of horses --

8 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: And it will continue to.

9 MR. LOVINGIER: -- are going up.

10 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Say it again.

11 MR. LOVINGIER: The quality of horses are going  
12 up.

13 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: So we're now talking have  
14 and have nots here.

15 MR. LOVINGIER: No, actually --

16 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- and that's not our job  
17 here is to -- we're here to have racing --

18 MR. LOVINGIER: So --

19 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: -- of all levels, not just  
20 concentrate allowance horses and up here. That's not --

21 MR. LOVINGIER: Real quick. Real quick, Oscar.  
22 We're all farmers. We're all agriculture. We're farmers.  
23 We have good crops and we have bad crops and that's just the  
24 way it happens that, you know, some years are better than  
25 other years.

1 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: But breeding is going down,  
2 right, for the record?

3 MR. LOVINGIER: There's less mares being bred.

4 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Okay. That's what we need  
5 to know.

6 CHAIR FERRARO: All right.

7 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: And there's a reason for  
8 that.

9 CHAIR FERRARO: Thanks, Terry.

10 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Okay.

11 CHAIR FERRARO: Any other comments from the Board?  
12 Can we have a motion from somebody?

13 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Yes, I move to approve the  
14 Humboldt request for date allocation, knowing that there's  
15 still another step in this process, so yes.

16 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Davis seconds.

17 CHAIR FERRARO: Okay. Damascus?

18 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: No.

19 CHAIR FERRARO: Dennis?

20 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: No.

21 CHAIR FERRARO: Peter?

22 COMMISSIONER STERN: No.

23 CHAIR FERRARO: Davis?

24 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yes.

25 CHAIR FERRARO: Oscar?

1 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Yes.

2 CHAIR FERRARO: Chairman votes no.

3 Let's see, well, I guess we need to call this  
4 meeting to order -- to adjournment. Can I have a motion to  
5 adjourn?

6 MR. MIRANDA: (Off mic.) Don't we have public  
7 comment left?

8 CHAIR FERRARO: We're all done.

9 MR. MIRANDA: Weren't we --

10 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Davis moves.

11 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: Public comment.

12 MR. MIRANDA: I asked and he said it would be at  
13 the end.

14 CHAIR FERRARO: Is there public comment?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHANEY: Well, we took item  
16 number three at the beginning.

17 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Let Leonard say what he  
18 wants to say.

19 Come on up, Leonard.

20 MR. MIRANDA: Yeah. (Indiscernible.)

21 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Yeah. No, we understand.  
22 It's okay. Go ahead.

23 MR. MIRANDA: I apologize. I'll make it brief.  
24 My name is Leonard Miranda. I'm the owner-operator of  
25 Integrity Therapeutic Racing. And I was going to be sending

1 some correspondence to the CHRB Board on this concept. But  
2 this kind of illustrates. I was hoping this wouldn't be a  
3 repeat of what we saw last year and it was kind of a repeat,  
4 not quite as severe as last year, I believe, but it was a  
5 repeat.

6           What I'm proposing is a coalition of the key  
7 stakeholders in our industry, specifically the CTT, the  
8 CTBA, First Racing, the DMTC, the key stakeholders come  
9 together and develop a game plan for going forward with  
10 racing in California. We know we're going to have a new  
11 governor in November. That's probably the biggest, biggest  
12 thing that can either improve or lessen racing or keep us in  
13 status.

14           It's evident here that we don't have any coalition  
15 because we're fighting amongst ourselves. We're eating our  
16 own. And if we had everything done right in terms of  
17 communication, this meeting probably wouldn't even be  
18 happening because we would have ironed these things out in  
19 advance and not burn everybody's time.

20           So I will be sending some more in writing to this  
21 Board. I would be happy to interface. I'll try to make it  
22 real quick.

23           I came out of law enforcement. I've been in this  
24 industry 12 years, love it. I was part of a 450-person  
25 organization. I developed a five-year strategic plan for

1 our operations, a very important document to keep people on  
2 the same page and participating. So not indicating we  
3 should have a five-year strategic plan, but we need a plan.  
4 And I just don't see, I see we're very fragmented.

5 So that's all I have to say.

6 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you.

7 MR. MIRANDA: -- for now.

8 CHAIR FERRARO: Thank you. Something for the  
9 industry to work on.

10 Can we have a motion to adjourn.

11 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Well put, absolutely.

12 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Davis moves.

13 CHAIR FERRARO: Second? Second?

14 COMMISSIONER STERN: Second.

15 CHAIR FERRARO: Oscar -- I mean, Damascus?

16 COMMISSIONER CASTELLANOS: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER ALFIERI: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER STERN: Yes.

19 CHAIR FERRARO: Oscar?

20 VICE CHAIR GONZALES: Yes.

21 CHAIR FERRARO: And Commissioner Davis?

22 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yes.

23 CHAIR FERRARO: And the chairman votes yes. Thank  
24 you all for coming.

25 (The Board adjourned at 12:43 p.m.)

## CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were reported by me, a certified electronic court reporter and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 13th day of March, 2026.



MARTHA L. NELSON, CERT\*\*367

## CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were transcribed by me, a certified transcriber and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript, to the best of my ability, from the electronic sound recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.



MARTHA L. NELSON, CERT\*\*367

March 13, 2026