



CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD

PRESS RELEASE

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SUMMARY OF CHRB ACTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS 8-15-24

The California Horse Racing Board conducted a meeting on Thursday, August 15, 2024, at the Del Mar Hilton. Chairman Gregory Ferraro chaired the meeting, joined by Vice Chair Oscar Gonzales and Commissioners Brenda Washington Davis and Thomas Hudnut.

The audio of this entire Board meeting is available on the CHRB Website (www.chrb.ca.gov) under the [Webcast](#) link, accessed through the Media Room tab. In brief:

- The Board approved the license application for the Los Angeles Turf Club to conduct a race meet at Santa Anita Park that will operate from September 27 through October 27. Racing will be offered on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and on Monday, October 14.

Chairman Ferraro opened the discussion by announcing that henceforth all race meets in the state will no longer directly benefit from simulcast revenue on any day a program is canceled for reason other than inclement weather. Instead, the simulcast revenue from such a canceled program will be channeled into regulatory costs for all meets in the state. “When you don’t race, everyone benefits, not just one track,” explained Ferraro.

Canceling race cards has become increasingly common throughout the state since the CHRB introduced an Inclement Weather Policy in 2020 that discourages racing on unsafe surfaces – part of the CHRB’s overall program to protect horses and jockeys. Those cancellations will not be affected by the change. But occasionally programs have been canceled for other reasons. For example, Golden Gate Fields canceled five programs earlier this year due to lack of entries. And the State Fair more

recently canceled two programs for the same reason. Such cancelations would fall under the new policy.

Chairman Ferraro took the opportunity to ask Santa Anita executives about their plans for the newly installed synthetic surface (Tapeta) on their training track. Santa Anita is proceeding cautiously in this matter. Horses have been exercising on this interior oval, sometimes in company, without incident.

Santa Anita General Manager Nate Newby said the long-term goal could be to conduct actual races over the Tapeta surface – perhaps during the winter meet when inclement weather forces races off of the turf course. He stressed this would only be done in consultation with horsemen and the CHRB. He said they might conduct non-wagering trial races on the training track before going further. The training track has a circumference of about 6 ½ furlongs, comparable to the nighttime oval at Los Alamitos and the track at Fairplex Park. Newby said the training track was banked to racing specifications when the new surface was installed.

- The Board approved the license application for the Los Alamitos Horse Racing Association to conduct a daytime thoroughbred meet at Los Alamitos that will operate from September 13 through September 22. This meet will run concurrently with night racing at Los Alamitos. Chairman Ferraro reaffirmed that the meet would fall under the new policy for canceled programs.
- The Board approved the license application for the Big Fresno Fair to operate a fair meet in Fresno from September 21 through October 14. Chairman Ferraro pointed out that fairs also fall under the new policy for canceled programs.
- In his report to the Board, Executive Director Scott Chaney said, “There was a fair amount of discussion today regarding trends in fatalities. I wanted to point out that those statistics are on our website. California is the most transparent in reporting these and became even more so in July with the 72-hour regulation (which expanded the requirement for reporting equine fatalities). I also wanted to be sure that the Board and those listening have an accurate picture of the current numbers. To wit, Santa Anita has recorded three less fatalities to this point this year than the same point last year, and the entire state has recorded three less to this date compared to last. While we still have work to do, the overall trend based on our hard work is clear.”

- The California Horse Power Coalition presented the findings from the 2024 economic impact study commissioned by the American Horse Council. Particularly significant, the study determined that horse racing generated \$2.5 billion in total value to the California's economy. The Breeders' Cup is expected to generate a \$300 million total impact in the Del Mar region later this year.
- Worker advocate Oscar De La Torre reported that the vast majority of backstretch workers from Golden Gate Fields have transitioned to similar positions in Pleasanton or Sacramento. He also reported that more than \$125,000 was donated to help with worker housing needs.
- The Board approved various regulatory amendments pertaining to license applications, claiming races, and confidentiality.
- The Board approved the nominations of Thomas R. Bell, Damascus Castellanos, and Josh Rubinstein to the Board of Directors for the California Thoroughbred Horsemen's Foundation.
- Extensive comments from public speakers can be heard through the audio link for the Board meeting.

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