

DATE: MARCH 6, 2025

FROM: ACCOUNTING

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION NO. _____ - APPROVAL TO ESTABLISH THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES HARBOR DEPARTMENT TRAVEL POLICY

SUMMARY:

Staff requests approval to establish the City of Los Angeles (City) Harbor Department's (Harbor Department) Travel Policy and Procedures (Travel Policy). The City Controller's Travel Policy is based on Division 4, Chapter 5, Article 4, Section 4.242 of the City of Los Angeles Administrative Code (Administrative Code), and the Harbor Department's proposed Travel Policy largely follows the City Controller's Travel Policy, with a few minor modifications. The proposed Travel Policy would become effective upon approval from the Board of Harbor Commissioners (Board). The Harbor Department will continue to be financially responsible for the reimbursement of eligible travel expenses.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Harbor Commissioners:

1. Find that the Director of Environmental Management has determined that the proposed action is administratively exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Article II Section 2(f) of the Los Angeles City CEQA Guidelines;
2. Approve the proposed City of Los Angeles Harbor Department's Travel Policy and Procedures;
3. Authorize the Board Secretary to notify the City Controller's Office of the newly established Harbor Department Travel Policy; and
4. Adopt Resolution No. _____.

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DISCUSSION:

Background/Context – The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code Division 4, Chapter 5, Article 4, Section 4.242 outlines the policy for travel expenses, non-travel expenses and elected officials' contingency account expenditures. Below is a summary of the major provisions of the City's travel policy.

- Department officials and employees will receive reimbursement for their reasonable and necessary expenses when engaged in official, approved business travel.
- No reimbursement will be made to employees or officials for expenses associated with attendance at business meetings, including meals, at private clubs that have a reputation in the community for implementing a membership policy, which discriminates on the basis of race, religion, sex, or national origin.
- Advance City Council approval is needed for foreign travel (except to Canada and Mexico) involving more than one City Commissioner.
- Any travel by City employees and non-elected officials engaging in advocacy or meeting with government agencies need to have the approval of the Mayor.
- The Administrative Code requires all non-elected City Officials and all other City employees to notify the Mayor, the Chair of the Committee that oversees the Intergovernmental Relations function, and the Chief Legislative Analyst prior to traveling on official City business to Sacramento or to Washington, D.C. Effective March 25, 2013, employees of the City Council or Office of the Mayor are exempt from this requirement.
- Travel authority documents (i.e. GAETL) for all Department Heads and Commissioners, require approval by the Mayor's Office:
- In accordance with good business practice, it is the policy of the Department that no more than four staff persons are on the same flight.
- Department Head is responsible for approving their staffs travel Authority and Personal Expense Statement documents. Department Head may designate other Authorized Approval(s) for travel.

Proposed Travel Policy and Procedures – The Harbor Department has followed the City Controller's Travel Policy but seeks to establish its own travel policy to meet the Harbor Department's operational needs. Harbor Department staff propose to modify from the City Controller's Travel Policy as summarized below:

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Section	City Controller’s Travel Policy	Proposed Harbor Department Travel Policy
Transportation Expenses, Airline Travel	Airline travel expenses are reimbursable at the lowest regular fare available (coach or economy class) for regularly scheduled airlines for the date and time selected.	Travelers may book any fare within the Economy booking classification. Travelers are not required to book lower fares that require extra fees (e.g. carry-on items or seat selection).
Per Diem Expenses (Lodging, Meals and Incidentals)	<p>Reimbursements for food and lodging shall not exceed the per diem limits expressed in the City Budget Manual published by the CAO.</p> <p>Meals and Incidental Expenses Reimbursement Methods: (1) Federal per diem, (2) Actual costs capped at federal per diem, and (3) Actual costs capped at \$80/day.</p>	<p>The City uses the federal destination per diem rates as specified by the United States General Services Administration (www.gsa.gov/perdiem) as the maximum rates for reimbursements on lodging and meals and incidental expenses.</p> <p>Meals and Incidental Expenses Reimbursement Method: Federal per diem</p>
Other Travel Expenses	Gratuities are allowable expenses, where reasonable and customary. Tips to waiters (up to 15 percent of the restaurant bill exclusive of taxes), and drivers (up to 15 percent of the fare) are considered customary. Service charges required by service providers (e.g., gratuity added to restaurant bill for large parties) are fully reimbursable.	Gratuities are allowable expenses, where reasonable and customary. Tips to waiters (up to 20 percent of the restaurant bill exclusive of taxes), and drivers (up to 20 percent of the fare) are considered customary. Service charges required by service providers (e.g., gratuity added to restaurant bill for large parties) are fully reimbursable.
Special Circumstances Requiring Exceptions to Standard Guidelines, Airline Travel	The origin and/or destination are outside the Continental United States and the scheduled flight time, including non-overnight layovers and change of planes, is in excess of 14 hours and the traveler is required to report to duty the following day or sooner.	Where the origin and/or destination are outside of North America (excluding travel within the same continent).

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Staff recommend deviating from the City Controller's Travel Policy and formally establishing its own Travel Policy to be comparable to Los Angeles World Airports' (LAWA) recently approved travel policy. Similar to LAWA, staff are requesting to remove the 14-hour travel duration requirement to allow for airfare other than Economy (e.g. business-class airfare) when travelling outside of North America. In many cases, employees marginally miss the number of required hours and are obliged to book economy for long flights. Additionally, in many instances employees are required to attend meetings, conferences, and other work-related activities immediately after landing. In such cases, employees have traveled a day early and/or returned a day later to allow for rest, thus increasing lodging and meal costs. By establishing its own travel policy, the Harbor Department would be able to better mitigate travel costs and reduce overall trip durations while also offering employees a more convenient form of transportation.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

The proposed action is the approval to establish the Harbor Department's Travel Policy, which is an administrative action. Therefore, the Director of Environmental Management has determined that the proposed action is administratively exempt from the requirements of CEQA in accordance with Article II Section 2(f) of the Los Angeles City CEQA Guidelines.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Approval of the proposed action will establish the City of Los Angeles Harbor Department's Travel Policy and Procedures. Each Harbor Department division will continue to budget for travel-related expenses as part of the annual budget adoption process, subject to Board approval, within each division's respective travel accounts.

CITY ATTORNEY:

The Office of the City Attorney has reviewed the proposed Travel Policy, and it raises no legal issues at this time.

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TRANSMITTALS:

1. City of Los Angeles Harbor Department Travel Policy and Procedures

FIS Approval: 
CA Approval: 



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