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MAYOR SCHAAF AND VISIT OAKLAND ANNOUNCE THE CITY WELCOMED A RECORD 3.6 MILLION VISITORS IN 2015

Tourism Generates \$795 Million in Economic Impact and Supports More Than 7,000 Jobs

Oakland, CA (January 26, 2017) — **Mayor Libby Schaaf** and **Visit Oakland**, the city's official destination marketing organization, announced today that Oakland welcomed a record 3.6 million tourists in 2015. Oakland visitors have increased their spending by 23% over a three-year period (2012-2015) generating an estimated \$795 million in overall economic impact (sales at Oakland businesses), supporting more than 7,000 Oakland jobs. The announcement was made at the Oakland Chamber of Commerce's State of Oakland Business event by **Visit Oakland President and CEO Mark Everton** and **Aran Ryan from Tourism Economics**.

"Through the hard work of Visit Oakland and their success promoting our great city as a premiere tourism destination, we welcomed more visitors to Oakland than ever before," said **Mayor Libby Schaaf**. "Tourism is a proven economic driver, supporting our local businesses and creating jobs for Oaklanders, and therefore, it is important that we continue to meet the growing demand of travelers interested in exploring Oakland."

"Oakland has so many rich offerings and we are proud to report that the city welcomed an unprecedented number of visitors in 2015," said **Visit Oakland President and CEO, Mark Everton**. "We look forward to encouraging even more people to experience Oakland's diverse neighborhoods, unique cultural attractions, delicious restaurants and one-of-a-kind shopping boutiques."

Tourism employment growth is outpacing that of overall city employment with the number of hospitality jobs increasing 12% since 2012. The travel and tourism sector sustains 7,011 jobs or approximately 1-in-29 jobs across Oakland with a labor payroll of \$256 million.

Visitor spending in Oakland also expanded and increased 7% percent from 2014 and this additional money spread amongst Oakland's hotels, restaurants, retail stores, attractions and small businesses helped offset the average household tax burden by \$450 per household.

"Visit Oakland's efforts to promote Oakland as a world-class destination not only results in generating tax revenue for the City and economic benefit to the community, it also creates hundreds of entry level jobs for Oakland's youth and provides successful careers in the Hospitality Industry," said **Sima Patel, Chair Visit California's Board of Directors**. "Many of these jobs pave the way for management level positions and lifelong careers in hospitality."

Hotel room demand has outpaced supply in Oakland since 2011. Home to only 5,000 hotel rooms, in 2015, Oakland's room demand was almost 22% higher than 2010. While the occupancy rate in 2015 was unchanged from 2014, due to low supply, the average daily room rate rose 13% to \$135, contributing an extra \$3 million in hotel and sales taxes to the city's economy.



With new promotional campaigns aimed at reaching British, Canadian and Mexican travelers and added international flights from British Airways, Norwegian Airlines and Southwest Airlines launching in 2017, Visit Oakland is forecasting they will welcome more international visitors in 2017, which will increase visitor spending and economic impact.

The majority of visitors, a little more than 64%, traveled to Oakland in 2015 for leisure purposes. Nearly a third of visitors traveled to the city more than once over the past three years. Visit Oakland is confident that the city will continue to reach these audiences with long-running campaigns such as Restaurant Week (January 19-29) which offers dining deals for \$20, \$30, \$40 or \$50.

In addition, Visit Oakland recently announced the Oakland Spotlight initiative to encourage locals and visitors to explore small businesses in the diverse and vibrant neighborhoods in Oakland. In February, the marketing organization will launch the *Oakland Ale Trail*, a new campaign aimed at the young intrepid traveler, showcasing the many craft breweries in Oakland. The Oakland Ale Trail is complementary to the already existing *Oakland Urban Wine Trail*, which encourages visitors and residents to explore Oakland's unique urban wineries. By promoting Oakland's small business community, the organization will continue to showcase Oakland's entrepreneurial spirit to visitors from around the world.

Follow Visit Oakland on social media using **@visitoakland**, **#oaklandspotlight** and **#oaklandloveit**.

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ABOUT VISIT OAKLAND

Visit Oakland is a private, not-for-profit, 501(c)(6) organization, with a 21-member board of directors and full time staff whose goal is to increase tourism's economic impact to Oakland through destination development and brand management. For more information, visit visitoakland.org.

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