

Opinion Editorial: BC Tourism Matters

Vancouver—From May 28 to June 3, businesses, associations, and tourism organizations across the province will celebrate Tourism Week. The tourism industry is a powerful force in British Columbia: approximately 19.7 million overnight visitors vacation in BC each year, contributing \$15.7 billion in revenue annually to the provincial economy. Tourism touches every part of our province and has become one of BC's leading business sectors. This week is an important time to recognize not only the economic benefits this industry brings to British Columbia, but also the cultural and social contributions tourism delivers.

Tourism contributes more to our GDP than any primary resource industry. In 2015, tourism contributed more to GDP (\$7.4 billion) than any other primary resource industry including oil & gas extraction (\$7.2 billion), mining (\$3.8 billion), forestry & logging (\$1.9 billion), and agriculture & fish (\$1.5 billion).

Tourism in BC is growing. In 2015, the BC tourism industry generated \$15.7 billion in revenue, a 5.3% increase over 2014, and a 37.3% increase from 2005. The industry's contribution in GDP to the provincial economy rose 5.6% in 2015 over 2014. Tourism is growing at almost twice the pace of the BC economy as a whole.

Tourism offers exciting and diverse careers. Ranging from first jobs to highly-skilled technical, managerial and professional roles, the tourism industry creates diverse careers: helicopter pilots, sommeliers, chefs, wildlife experts and more. In 2015, 127,700 people were employed in BC tourism-related businesses, a 1.2% increase over 2014 and a 16% increase since 2005. BC is home to over 18,900 tourism businesses, and the industry paid \$4.5 billion in wages and salaries in 2015, up 4.0% from 2014 and 36.1% since 2005.

Tourism improves the quality of life of BC residents. Festivals, museums, sport events, transportation, parks, and dining—all activities that British Columbians benefit from and enjoy -- are supported by visitors in the tourism economy, strengthening the social, cultural and economic well-being of our province.

Tourism creates connections. Tourism enriches our lives and refreshes our spirits as we get away from the everyday. We invite all British Columbians to welcome visitors into their communities, and take in all the province has to offer.

We encourage you to explore BC and experience our province's powerful nature and warm hospitality for yourself.

Marsha Walden
CEO, Destination BC

Walt Judas
CEO, Tourism Industry Association of BC

<http://www.destinationbc.ca/BC-Tourism-Industry/The-Power-of-Tourism/Tourism-Week>

Images to download and share are available [via Dropbox](#).
Social Media Hashtag: #BCTourismMatters

Media Relations Contacts:

Destination BC

Media.Relations@DestinationBC.ca

Tourism Industry Association of BC

Laura Plant

Manager, Communications & Membership Support

lplant@tiabc.ca

778-788-3499