



Ref: 41681

March 29, 2021

Walt Judas, Chief Executive Officer
Tourism Industry Association of BC
Email: wjudas@tiabc.ca

Brenda Baptiste, Chair
Indigenous Tourism BC
Email: brendabaptiste.oib@gmail.com

Ingrid Jarrett, Chief Executive Officer
British Columbia Hotel Association
Email: ingrid.jarrett@bcha.com

Dear Walt Judas, Brenda Baptiste, and Ingrid Jarrett:

Thank you for your letter of February 22, 2021, addressed to the Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Finance; the Honourable Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation; and myself, regarding your proposal for the B.C. Tourism Recovery Investment Program (B.C. TRIP), which aims to provide support to B.C.'s large tourism operators.

The Tourism Industry Association of BC, Indigenous Tourism BC and the BC Hotel Association have been strong voices for the sector during these challenging times and I am grateful for your significant work on this proposal. Large tourism operators are critical elements of British Columbia's tourism ecosystem, helping to support smaller businesses within communities and creating jobs for thousands of people in our province. I asked ministry staff to review your submission in detail and I understand that Neilane Mayhew, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, met with you on March 4, 2021, to discuss the proposal further and that additional meetings are being scheduled.

Government is taking a coordinated provincial approach to recovery, and I would like to assure you that I will continue to strongly advocate for tourism workers and operators as part of this work, which includes the current provincial budget process. The Province and tourism leaders such as yourselves have worked closely together since the beginning of the pandemic and we greatly value this ongoing collaboration. Only by continuing to work toward our shared goal of supporting the tourism industry will British Columbia truly see a strong economic recovery.

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As you know, we have already acted on a number of the Tourism Task Force's recommendations, including a \$100 M tourism-specific stream under the Small- and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program. In total, the Province has invested \$345 M for Small and Medium Business Recovery grants. Indigenous Tourism BC also launched its BC Indigenous Tourism Recovery Fund in early February 2021, with \$5 M in provincial funding.

In addition, as I mentioned at the TIABC Industry Conference, we are working on the safety certificate program with go2HR, and I am looking forward to that work completing in the future. My ministry continues to review the remaining Tourism Task Force recommendations in detail to find the best path forward towards recovery and eventually resilience within the sector.

My colleague Minister Kahlon and I will continue to raise the need for additional liquidity support for B.C.'s large tourism operators with my federal counterpart, The Honourable Melanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages. I can confirm that Neilane Mayhew has also raised this matter with the federal Associate Deputy of Economic Development and Official Languages.

I recognize the situation the tourism industry is facing is incredibly difficult right now and I appreciate all your ongoing efforts in support of B.C.'s visitor economy. We will get through this pandemic together and emerge stronger than ever.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Mark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melanie Mark
Hli Haykwhl Wii Xsgaak
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

pc: Honourable Selina Robinson

Honourable Ravi Kahlon