

May 6, 2021

Rt. Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Hon. Mélanie Joly
Minister of Economic Development & Official Languages
Innovation, Science & Economic Development Canada
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5



Re: Restart Plan for the Tourism & Hospitality industry, and further support measures to address liquidity

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Joly,

On behalf of the members and stakeholders of the Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia (TIABC), thank you for the work that you're doing to keep residents and visitors safe during the COVID-19 crisis. Canada is widely acknowledged as a leader in tackling the pandemic, thanks in large part to your efforts and those of health care providers throughout the country. I also wish to thank you for the extensive government support offered to our sector over the last 13 months, and in particular, the recent measures for tourism and hospitality introduced as part of the federal budget.

As you are acutely aware, our sector relies on the movement of people, including visitors from within Canada and from other countries. Therefore, the ban on non-essential international travel, as well as other domestic travel restrictions across Canada for most of 2020 and 2021, has led to significant hardship for tens of thousands of small, medium and large business owners, as well as hundreds of thousands of valued and skilled workers in BC and across the country, many of whom remain unemployed.

At the same time, it's important to note that our sector fully supports the most recent BC travel order in an effort to protect the health of residents, safeguard the health care system, reduce COVID-19 transmission rates, and to see the orders lifted in time to save the critical summer season for tourism operators.

As more countries, provinces, states and cities around the world open or prepare to re-open to non-essential travel, TIABC believes Canada must identify criteria that would allow for travel restrictions to be lifted in order to restart the visitor economy. To that end, we respectfully request answers to specific industry questions that would be helpful for planning and to work toward a full re-opening in future:

1. What benchmarks does Canada need to achieve to allow international leisure travel to resume?
2. When does the Federal Government anticipate lifting border restrictions?
3. How can Canada implement a *digital proof of vaccination card* or something similar to allow fully immunized people to visit our country for non-essential purposes?
4. If the international border cannot be opened to all countries this year, is the federal government willing to accept visitors from certain countries where all citizens have been fully vaccinated?
5. How can Canada (& by extension each province & territory) use rapid testing as a means to allow people to travel more freely and/or reduce the quarantine period for international visitors, as well as for residents returning from abroad?



Please be assured that the tourism and hospitality industry is keen to work with your government (along with the Province of BC) on a re-opening plan to ensure we fully understand the parameters that government puts in place, and to be part of the solution to current obstacles.

In the meantime, it is important to note that many businesses are still struggling and may not be able to survive another peak season without international visitors. Therefore, further government assistance in the form of working capital grants and/or low interest/no interest loans is necessary to allow businesses to remain solvent until such time as international non-essential travel resumes. While many existing government measures have been welcome and helpful, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, there are countless larger businesses including hotels, transportation providers, major attractions and others that have yet to qualify for assistance or are unable to access relief due to rigid criteria and/or unfavourable terms resulting in a significant increase in debt load, the inability to meet fixed cost expenses, billions of dollars in cumulative losses, as well as the loss of thousands of skilled and valued employees. Similarly, many seasonal businesses have been unable to access relief because of criteria that fails to take into account fluid revenue cycles year-over-year.

TIABC, along with our provincial and territorial counterparts would welcome the opportunity to discuss new measures or adjustments to existing programs that would be most helpful for Canada's hardest hit sector to survive and rebuild in the months and years ahead. We would also welcome the opportunity to work with you on a restart plan for Canada's visitor economy.

Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Joly, thank you for your leadership during this most trying time. We look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Sincerely,

Walt Judas
CEO, TIABC
778-953-0620