MEDIA RELEASE

TOURISM WEEK 2019 – CELEBRATING SUCCESS AND SEEKING SOLUTIONS

Vancouver, BC – May 26, 2019: The Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC) is commemorating National Tourism Week (May 26 to June 2) by issuing a call to action for all BC tourism stakeholders to connect with local, provincial and federal elected officials to both celebrate the industry's success but also remind decision-makers of how important BC's visitor economy is to residents and communities in every corner of the province. Although the tourism industry is expected to show growth in several BC regions for a fifth straight year, the sector is often taken for granted or not recognized as a key economic pillar and generator of good, well paying jobs.

- According to Destination British Columbia, the BC tourism industry generated $18.4 billion in revenue, produced $1.2 billion in provincial tax revenue, and contributed more GDP than any other primary resource industry in 2017.

Other highlights include:

- BC's Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture recently released a framework entitled *Welcoming Visitors, Benefiting Locals, Working Together: A Strategic Framework for Tourism in British Columbia*, which outlines government's vision for continued, sustainable growth in B.C. tourism. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2019TAC0016-000305

- Indigenous tourism continues to grow across British Columbia. In November (12-14), Kelowna will host the 2019 International Indigenous Tourism Conference. On a related note, Indigenous Tourism BC and the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association recently signed an MOU pledging to collaborate on promoting growth of Indigenous tourism, including the establishment of an Indigenous Tourism Specialist for the region.

- The recent BC Tourism Industry Conference (BCTIC) attracted some 550 delegates to Vancouver. With strong support from Destination BC and other industry partners, TIABC will host the 2020 BCTIC in Victoria next March (4-6). www.bctourismconference.ca

- TIABC continued its membership growth trend with increasing support shown in all three categories of membership: tourism businesses, tourism industry associations, and destination marketing organizations (DMOs). TIABC's membership includes over 50 DMOs and 20 tourism industry sector organizations representing some 2, 500 tourism business operators. www.tiabc.ca/join-tiabc/member-directory

Although the tourism industry is BC's third largest business sector, it faces many challenges including chronic labour shortages, available and affordable housing for workers, land use and tenure obstacles, recreational fishing limitations, climate change impacts and more.

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"We continue to work with all levels of government to resolve these issues or mitigate the impacts," said Chan. "While we are making progress, we still have work to do to ensure the industry is operating at full capacity and maximizing its potential."

TIABC partners with several organizations to address challenges and opportunities including the BC Chamber of Commerce, the Coalition of BC Businesses, the Adventure Tourism Coalition, the Tourism Emergency Management Committee, and the Minister's Tourism Engagement Council, among others.

As part of Tourism Week, TIABC has enlisted tourism stakeholders across BC to get involved on social media with the hashtag #BCTourismMatters to be part of provincial and national online conversations. They are also encouraged to visit Destination BC's website for Value of Tourism resources and Tourism Week information: www.destinationbc.ca/tourism-week

The Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC) advocates for the interests of British Columbia's $18.4 billion visitor economy. As a not-for-profit tourism industry association, TIABC works collaboratively with its members – private sector tourism businesses, industry associations and destination marketing organizations – to ensure the best working environment for a competitive tourism industry.

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