



September 30, 2016

**TIABC CALLS ON CIVIC GOVERNMENTS AND THE PROVINCE TO IMPLEMENT
REGULATIONS TO HELP ADDRESS THE PROBLEM
OF AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR WORKERS**

Victoria, BC – The Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia (TIABC) is urging civic politicians across B.C., as well as the provincial government to develop and enforce regulations to deal with the proliferation of short-term vacation rental (STRs) accommodation in dozens of communities across the province.

During a lively and engaging panel at the UBCM conference in Victoria, panelists and delegates talked about the shrinking and unaffordable rental pool in many communities that has caused residents to leave and contributed to the difficulty employers have in attracting employees.

Recognizing that there is no one solution to the complex issue of short-term vacation rentals, TIABC suggested the province can play a role by eliminating the exemption on PST and the Municipal & Regional District Tax that owners of properties with less than four rooms receive under current regulation.

The organization also urged local government delegates at UBCM to develop and/or enforce their own community regulations on STRs, to not only compel property owners to legally offer rooms for rent, but to level the playing field for traditional accommodation providers (hotels, B&Bs, resorts) who pay significant provincial and business taxes.

The session on STRs took place one day after delegates passed a resolution that committed UBCM to working with several provincial government ministries to review the current tax policy that prevents small accommodation providers and online platforms such as Airbnb from collecting the requisite accommodation taxes that could add millions of dollars in revenues to provincial coffers and bolster marketing funds for community destination marketing organizations.

Quotes

CEO Walt Judas, TIABC - "The crux of the issue is about finding affordable accommodation for employees who choose to work in tourism or any one of a number of industries in communities around the province. It's difficult enough to recruit seasonal employees, let alone finding them a place to live. We need to find ways to return some of the short-term rentals back into the longer-term rental pool to help address the problem. In this case, regulation and taxation makes sense."

President, CEO Paul Nursey, Tourism Victoria – "With a near zero vacancy rate, the ability to attract the talent we need to continue to build our tourism economy is seriously hampered when potential residents cannot find a place to live. Without skilled personnel, we run the risk of seeing a decline in service levels and that doesn't bode well for our industry and reputation."

Mayor Josie Osborne, Tofino – "Short-term rentals are an important part of a diverse range of accommodation options in Tofino, offering a unique way of experiencing a visit to our community while providing a source of income to property owners. For over a decade, we've taken a balanced approach to regulating short-term rentals, but a growing number of unlicensed short-term rentals and the subsequent loss of long-term rentals for residents and workers has forced us to take a far more proactive approach to education and enforcement. Not only are we seeing success, but also residents, traditional accommodation operators, and local government are finding ways to dialogue about housing solutions and work together to create a fair playing field so that everybody wins - including our guests."

The Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia's vision is **"For tourism to be recognized as one of British Columbia's leading and sustainable industries."**

As the primary advocate for British Columbia's visitor economy, TIABC unites operators, sectors, DMOs, government and residents to support and be passionate about making B.C. a great place for tourism.