

## TOURISM & HOSPITALITY SECTORS RESPOND TO 2021 BC BUDGET

### *New Measures Appreciated but may not Save Some Businesses*

**Vancouver, April 20, 2021:** BC's major tourism and hospitality sectors welcome tourism-related investments announced in today's provincial budget but say it may not be enough to save some businesses until such time travel restrictions are lifted and inter-provincial and international travellers can once again visit British Columbia.

The Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC), BC Hotel Association (BCHA), Alliance of Beverage Licensees (ABLE BC), and Restaurants Canada (RC) acknowledge and appreciate the Province's commitment to support tourism recovery including help for major anchor attractions, as well as funds to continue the Small and Medium-sized Business Recovery Grant Program and the promise to extend the Circuit Breaker program in view of impending travel restrictions. At the same time, access to further recovery contingencies the Province budgeted will be needed to help countless businesses hanging on by a thread.

Finance Minister Selina Robinson acknowledged the hard-hit tourism and hospitality sector noting it will be challenged by health measures for some time. She also referenced recovery contingencies that remain an option for the sector as the pandemic lingers.

The Province's 2021 budget included the following allocations related to the tourism and hospitality industry:

- \$195 million to continue the Small & Medium-sized Business Recovery Grant Program
- \$100 million to support tourism recovery including help for major anchor attractions
- \$20 million for community destination development grants to help with new tourism infrastructure like trails and airport improvements
- \$83 million (over 3 years) in operating and capital funding for BC Parks to expand and improve trails and backcountry infrastructure, add new campsites, purchase new land to expand parks, improve the Discover Camping reservation system, and support existing park infrastructure
- \$6 million in capital improvement grants for the Arts Infrastructure Program

Funding for tourism recovery is included as part of the Province's \$3.25 billion for pandemic and recovery contingencies this year including more than \$1.1 billion in unallocated funds for unanticipated recovery measures. Government has also set aside \$1 billion in 2022/23 and \$300 million in 2023/24 for similar purposes.

## Quotes

### **Walt Judas, CEO, TIABC**

“New money to help the tourism and hospitality is certainly most appreciated. Aside from working with government to ensure that available funds flow to tourism businesses as quickly as possible, we will continue to advocate for further relief to access the unanticipated recovery measures that the Province committed to for situations such as the impending travel ban and ongoing border closures that have left our industry in a desperate state. We recognize that many tourism businesses may not survive absent of further support, so we look forward to our dialogue with the Province in the days ahead to find additional ways to help.”

### **Ingrid Jarrett, President/CEO, BC Hotel Association**

“We’re glad to see the \$120 million allocated for support for the tourism sector to assist anchor attractions, for community destination development, and to implement recommendations from the Tourism Task Force. We also acknowledge Minister Robinson’s comments that one of the reasons for the significant amount set aside for contingency funding was to allow government to assist hard hit sectors such as tourism, which continues to experience harm from the ongoing and changing nature of the pandemic. Our members have seen revenues that have, on average, dropped by 70% while fixed costs have only dropped by 4.6%. This has an effect on workers, families and communities. We look forward to continuing to work with the Province to identify ways to help our members, their employees, and the communities they serve.”

### **Jeff Guignard, Executive Director, ABLE BC**

“Today’s budget shows how seriously government is about supporting BC’s beleaguered business community throughout this crisis. We are enormously appreciative of this quick action, but let’s be clear: BC’s hospitality sector is facing an existential crisis. We will need significantly more support in the months and years ahead to avoid massive bankruptcies and job losses while we struggle to get back on our feet.”

### **Mark von Schellwitz, Vice President, Western Canada, Restaurants Canada**

“We appreciate the additional support earmarked for struggling restaurants announced in today’s budget given that 80% of BC’s restaurateurs are currently operating at a loss or barely breaking even. A recent Restaurants Canada survey indicates that 90% of our members require ongoing government support to survive the pandemic. We look forward to continuing to work with the BC government on supports to help BC’s third largest employer survive and contribute to BC’s post pandemic recovery.”

In a normal year, BC’s \$21.5b+ tourism and hospitality industry consists of some 19,000+ businesses that employ over 320,000 people – more than half of which service the visitor economy directly. The sector enjoyed several years of record results for visitation, revenues and other key measures in most regions of the province until the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded in March of 2020. Currently, tens of thousands of employees remain sidelined while tourism revenues have declined by more than an estimated 70 percent.

**About the Tourism Industry Association of BC**

TIABC advocates for the interests of British Columbia's tourism industry. 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.

**About the BC Hotel Association**

The British Columbia Hotel Association is a non-profit organization that works on behalf of hoteliers at federal, provincial, and community levels, and champions issues such as taxation, tourism, marketing, corporate relations, labour, and consumer services. The BCHA has over 600 hotel members and 120 associate members, representing an industry made up of over 80,000 rooms and more than 60,000 employees.

**About the Alliance of Beverage Licensees**

BC's Alliance of Beverage Licensees is the leading voice of British Columbia's private liquor industry. Its membership includes private liquor stores, pubs, bars, nightclubs, hotel liquor licensees, and various agents, industry suppliers, and benefit providers. On behalf of their over 1,000 members, ABLE BC advocates for a thriving and sustainable private liquor industry.

**About Restaurants Canada**

Restaurants Canada is a national, not-for-profit association advancing the potential of Canada's diverse and dynamic foodservice industry through member programs, research, advocacy, resources and events. Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, British Columbia's \$15 billion foodservice sector employed nearly 193,000 people, and served 3.4 million customers every day.

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