



Honourable Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Jobs & Economic Growth
Room 134, 501 Belleville Street
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

September 19, 2025

Via email: JEDI.Minister@gov.bc.ca

RE: Ease of Doing Business Consultation Recommendations & Meeting Request

Dear Minister Kahlon,

On behalf of the Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia (TIABC) and our sector partners, thank you for launching the Province's *Ease of Doing Business* consultation. Tourism is a \$22 billion pillar of BC's economy, anchoring jobs and investment across urban centres and rural communities alike. To that end, your renewed focus on growth, competitiveness, and cutting red tape for businesses is particularly relevant for tourism operators who maintain that BC's visitor economy has the greatest potential to be the province's leading business sector.

In order for tourism to reach its full potential, the industry and Province must work together to address several challenges, as well as leverage opportunities. The following information provides a snapshot of current obstacles, as well as recommendations to resolve them.

Challenges Tourism Businesses are Facing

- Tourism operators that wish to expand their businesses or are looking to invest in experiences on crown or private lands must navigate multiple ministries and agencies with overlapping authority to receive approvals or direction, causing duplicate referrals, conflicting instructions, and costly delays.
- Timelines for project approvals, government service standards and status tracking are either non-existent or unclear, which is especially harmful for short construction and operating seasons for businesses looking to build or expand their current footprint.
- In recent years, businesses seeking new leases or tenure renewals are being issued untenable, short tenure terms and facing issues such as unclear renewal criteria and limited transferability options making it difficult for operators to secure financing and invest in rural infrastructure.

- The process for tenure renewals is fragmented, requiring applicants to re-enter data repeatedly. The lack of a one-stop digital portal, interactive mapping, or shared file number across ministries compounds the problems vis-à-vis timelines, approvals, and other processes.
- Indigenous consultation lacks consistent early-engagement tools and clear steps. The impact of viable, low-impact projects being stalled by convoluted or inefficient approval processes leads to job erosion, lack of investment, and few opportunities to foster reconciliation.
- Current rules charge full-year tenure rent and insurance, keep the tenure “clock” running when short-season operators are shut by wildfires, floods, or road failures as the province lacks fee proration or term extension tied to disaster closures.ⁱ

Recommendations for Government Consideration

A. Create a single tourism permitting access point:

Develop a cross-ministry assistance permit program with a single intake, shared file number, clear escalation path, and a JEG–WLRS co-chaired steering table to resolve inter-ministry fragmentation.

B. Digitize processes with BizPaL tools:

Provide a one-stop online tool with interactive land/water maps, required approvals, fees, timelines, checklists, and end-to-end status tracking across JEG, WLRS, Environment & Parks, municipalities, and federal bodies for operators to access and follow to simplify the tenure application process.

C. Adopt time-bound service standards with a public dashboard:

Publish step-by-step timelines (consultation milestones, decision window), use completion rules, and a fees structure for seasonal operators, including automatic relief when disaster closures disrupt business.

D. Lengthen tenure approvals to help unlock private investment:

Standardize longer terms (e.g. minimum 30 years) for established operators, develop transparent renewal criteria, and set a time limit on approvals (e.g. 6-12 months).

E. Advance economic reconciliation with clarity and supports:

Develop formal engagement guidelines or templates for Indigenous partnership agreements, provide capacity support for First Nations to participate in consultation processes, introduce clear sequencing of roles, and create pathways for Indigenous equity participation in tourism projects when opportunities arise.

These steps require minimal new spending yet will deliver meaningful productivity gains including faster approvals, additional private investment, stronger Indigenous partnerships, and more jobs in communities that need them most.

It should be noted that TIABC also supports the request by the Adventure Tourism Coalition for the creation of a dedicated Adventure Tourism Branch or crown agency to further unlock the potential of this significant sector.

Minister, thank you for your consideration. We would be delighted to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss these recommendations and provide case studies from operators that have been delayed by process complexity rather than project merit.

Thank you for your leadership. We look forward to partnering with your ministry to make BC the easiest and best place in Canada to operate a tourism business.

ⁱ **Operator example based on an Interior river-raft outfitter**

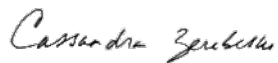
Context: 120-day operating window (June–Sept) on a small Crown-land tenure.

Issue: Wildfire orders closed access for 47 days mid-season; fees and insurance still due, and the tenure year counted as used.

Impact: Lost 40% of annual revenue, cash reserved for upgrades was diverted to fixed fees, lender put a planned boat purchase on hold.

Fix: Automatic fee proration after 14–30 consecutive closure days, tenure term extension equal to lost days, and deferred reporting creates no new risk, but survival capital is preserved for the next season.

Sincerely,



Cassandra Zerebeski

Policy Director, TIABC, czerebeski@tiabc.ca, 604-849-1550

CC:

Honourable Anne Kang, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

Honourable Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship

Honourable Tamara Davidson, Minister of Environment and Parks

Paul Choi, Parliamentary Secretary for Trade