



TOURISM
INDUSTRY
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BC

TIABC's Guide to the 2017 BC Election

#BCTourismMatters



About BC Election 2017

British Columbians go to the polls for the 41st time on May 9, 2017 to elect members of the Legislative Assembly.

In the 2013 general election, the BC Liberal Party, under the leadership of Premier Christy Clark, was re-elected with a majority government of 49 seats (now 47). The New Democratic Party, under the leadership of Adrian Dix, again formed the Official Opposition with a total of 34 seats (now 35). There are two independents and one Green Party member of the Legislature.

The 2017 election will be the first contested on a new electoral map completed in 2015, with the total number of constituencies increased from 85 to 87. New districts will be added for Richmond and Surrey, while the boundaries to 48 existing electoral districts will be adjusted.

Premier Christy Clark leads the Liberal Party, which is seeking its fifth consecutive term. John Horgan leads the NDP while Andrew Weaver leads the Green Party with plans to field candidates in all ridings.

The tourism industry portfolio is currently led by Hon. Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, and Minister Responsible for Labour. The official opposition critic for tourism is Vancouver West-End MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert.

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About TIABC

The Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC) advocates for the interests of British Columbia's \$15 billion+ visitor economy. As a not-for-profit trade 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.

Our vision is *"For tourism to be recognized as one BC's leading and sustainable industries."* As the primary advocate for British Columbia's visitor economy, TIABC's mission is to *"Unite operators, sectors, DMOs, government and residents to support and be passionate about making BC a great place for tourism."*

To grow BC's visitor economy and generate incremental revenues for operators and government, we need the right mix of marketing investment, infrastructure and product development, access to labour, and policies that facilitate and enable success. That's where TIABC's role benefits BC's tourism industry.

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About Tourism in B.C.

British Columbia's visitor economy generates more than \$15 billion in annual revenues, with \$1.1 billion in taxes paid to the province. Tourism is one of British Columbia's leading and sustainable industries, representing some 19,000 small businesses employing approximately 275,000 full-time equivalents.

2016 was the third consecutive year of record tourism numbers in many regions of the province, with 2017 shaping up to be another very strong year.

Key industry measures for 2016 show increases in virtually all major categories compared with 2015:

- International overnight visitors to BC = 5,532,065 (+12.3%)
- BC Ferries passenger volume = 20.6 million (+3.0%)
- YVR passenger volume = 22.3 million (+9.7%)
- Hotel room occupancy = +2.2% YTD Nov/16
- Average daily room rate = +6.6% YTD Nov/16
- Restaurant receipts = \$8.7 billion (+10.2%) YTD Nov /16
- 2016 marked another record year with more than 187,000 reservations made through Discover Camping



How to Get Involved in This Election

- [Find your candidates](#) through Elections BC www.elections.bc.ca
- [Get the facts](#) on the impact of tourism in British Columbia through www.tiabc.ca, www.destinationbc.ca or go2HR.ca
- Find out [how many tourism jobs](#) are in your riding for reference
- See what the parties have to say about British Columbia's visitor economy
- Compile a list of questions to ask candidates about the tourism industry
- See what TIABC members are saying about tourism through www.tiabc.ca
- Use *#BCTourismMatters* on Twitter and Facebook to show that tourism matters

How to Engage With Your Local Candidates

Local, provincial and federal governments have all recognized tourism's contribution to their respective economies and, by and large, have provided widespread support. Yet, some decision-makers overlook the tourism industry in the context of planning, policy and investment opportunities.

It is vital that industry stakeholders connect with local candidates from all parties to inform them about any issues and barriers to growth facing British Columbia's visitor economy. Let them know that *#BCTourismMatters*.

There are several ways for you to be directly engaged with candidates in the lead-up to the provincial election to ensure **tourism's** voice is loud and clear in the debates, discussions and within party platforms. Here are some examples:

- Attend or [organize](#) an all-candidates debate
- Invite candidates to an event you are hosting or to visit your business
- Write a letter to your candidates with your ideas and/or questions
- Call into radio talk shows to express your views or question a candidate on tourism related matters
- Become a spokesperson on behalf of your sector/business and make yourself available to media to discuss various tourism issues
- Inform candidates about what your business or organization brings to the community (e.g. economic impact, taxes paid, employment, services, etc.)
- Follow parties or candidates on social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook) and respond with likes, comments, messages, retweets, etc.

Tourism Priorities & Questions for Candidates

Tourism Workforce

- How will a (party name) government help the tourism industry secure a 'Seasonal Temporary Workers Program' or something similar to address labour challenges around the province?

Transportation & Access

- What will a (party name) government do to ensure that YVR remains a not-for-profit airport authority and continues to grow its business as British Columbia and Canada's gateway to North America and the Pacific Rim?
- How will a (party name) government further develop the province's transportation infrastructure (e.g. airports, highways, ferries) to ensure safe, cost-efficient and convenient access to all regions, and to help meet the growing expectations and demand of residents, visitors and tourism operators?

Sharing Economy

- What will a (party name) government do to ensure the protection and safety of consumers, as well as a level playing field for licensed tourism operators such as taxis with the impending introduction of ride-sharing services?

Land Use

- What will a (party name) government do to help mitigate the increasing number of conflicts between tourism operators and other users of crown lands including forest and mining companies, First Nations, recreational users and other stakeholders?
- Does your party have any solutions to address the increasing encroachment of developments around urban campgrounds/RV parks that affect a camper's experience and drive up land values?

BC Parks

- What will a (party name) government do to support the protection, maintenance, and/or further expansion of the British Columbia park system for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, and for use by commercial tourism operators?

Tourism Priorities & Questions for Candidates

Regulation

- What will a (party name) government do to increase protection for commercial operators, volunteer groups, land owners and/or managers from liability threats by outdoor recreationists involved in personal injury claims?
- Would your party consider changing current forestry and mining policies or regulations to mitigate the impact of those activities on Adventure Tourism (AT) viability?
- What policy changes would a (party name) government make to decrease threats and strengthen business/tenure security for AT operators?
- What kind of regulatory framework would a (party name) government implement to compel platforms such as Airbnb, FlipKey, VRBO and Home Away to collect PST (hotel room tax) and Municipal & Regional District Tax (MRDT), similar to what licensed accommodation providers remit?

Product & Economic Development

- What will a (party name) government do to help develop and support British Columbia's festivals, events, natural and historic sites to attract more visitors to the province?
- What will a (party name) government do to encourage further tourism product development (particularly First Nations) to ensure new, export-ready experiences for visitors to all regions of the province?
- What actions will a (party name) government take to discourage the closure of private campgrounds, and conversely, stimulate investment to build new private sector RV parks in high demand locations such as the Thompson Okanagan, Kootenay Rockies and Southern Vancouver Island?
- What will a (party name) government do to encourage more investment in the tourism sector, particularly in rural British Columbia?
- Would a (party name) government consider partnerships with other provinces to attract more tourists to BC/Western Canada and create a seamless visitor experience? If so, what would that partnership look like?

Tourism Priorities & Questions for Candidates

Tourism as a Primary Business Sector

- How would a (party name) government support and build tourism into one of British Columbia's leading and sustainable industries, and elevate its priority amongst other business sectors vis-à-vis investment and policy?

Tourism & Hospitality Education

- What will a (party name) government do to encourage more high-school students to enrol in tourism and hospitality programs throughout the province to ultimately help build the tourism workforce?
- What will a (party name) government do to build and strengthen tourism and hospitality programs in BC's post-secondary institutions?

Environment

- What plan does your party have to reduce the risks associated with man-made marine catastrophes?
- What steps will a (party name) government take to prevent hazardous cargo spills and to enhance coordination of spill response between municipal, federal and provincial agencies?
- What will a (party name) government do to protect and ensure the health of fish, whales and other marine species affected by increasing freighter, tanker and boat traffic along BC's coast?
- How will a (party name) government ensure the long-term sustainability of British Columbia's '*super-natural*' forests, mountains, lands and waterways?

TIABC Policy Positions (top-line overview)



Formula Funding for Destination BC

TIABC believes the need for formula funding for Destination British Columbia is paramount to maintain industry momentum and to ensure long-term funding security for tourism marketing. TIABC affirms the principle that formula-funding needs to be performance based, legislated and tied to PST revenues generated by the visitor economy.



Labour

TIABC is urging the Federal Government to consider a *Seasonal Tourism Workers Program* similar to the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program that allows for exemptions to the TFWP under certain terms and conditions, to help address labour shortages throughout British Columbia.



Short-term Rentals (STRs)

In order to level the playing field and return some short-term rental stock back into permanent housing TIABC calls for the elimination of tax regulation 78(1)b that exempts accommodation providers of less than four rooms from collecting PST and MRDT. The elimination would also allow platforms such as Airbnb and Flipkey to collect the same taxes as all other accommodation providers.



Ride Sharing

TIABC is not against services such as Uber from operating in BC. However, we believe Uber must comply with a similar system and regulations as taxi companies to ensure the safety of passengers, drivers and the public. These regulations may include (but are not limited to) national safety code standards applicable to private vehicles, regular vehicle inspections, vehicle age and emission standards, accessible vehicles, on-board cameras for protection of drivers and passengers, Work Safe BC coverage, business licenses, and remittance of requisite taxes such as PST and GST.



Airport Privatization

TIABC opposes privatization of Canada's major airports, including YVR. TIABC maintains that YVR should continue to operate under its current successful model of local oversight and as a not-for-profit organization. TIABC believes that YVR's plans for further expansion to benefit the entire BC tourism industry have the best chance of succeeding under the existing structure.

TIABC Policy Positions (top-line overview)



BC Ferries

In line with the demand curve overall, or growth potential within a specific region, government should consider an increase in service fees to BC Ferries. TIABC supports a fixed-link to the Sunshine Coast.



MRDT

TIABC believes that MRDT programs should be executed primarily by community DMOs whose central purpose is sales, marketing and destination management. In communities where another eligible MRDT entity structure already exists (e.g. economic development agency), TIABC recommends a transition to a newly formed community destination marketing organization as soon as feasibly possible.



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