



Ref: 41123

December 24, 2020

Tourism Task Force
c/o Tamara Vrooman, Chair
President and Chief Executive Officer
Vancouver Airport Authority
Email: Tamara_Vrooman@yvr.ca

Dear Tourism Task Force:

Thank you for your significant work over the past three months in fulfilling your objective of developing recommendations to support a strong recovery in British Columbia's (B.C.) tourism sector. In these trying and uncertain times, you came together to provide advice about a path forward, not only for the immediate future, but also as the industry starts to rebound and grow. I am deeply appreciative that you put the needs of people first in considering your recommendations—the workers who are at the heart of our industry, the business operators who have dedicated their lives to this industry, and the community members who welcome visitors to share in the beauty of our Province.

I want to recognize the time each of you gave to this process, particularly those who are also leading large organizations through the most challenging period ever faced by this industry. Each of you brought an important and unique perspective to the deliberations and, by working together, you presented a report that truly reflects the diversity of B.C.'s tourism industry. From laid-off hotel staff in our urban centres, to remote wilderness tourism operators who were unable to open this year, the Tourism Task Force's Final Report gives a voice to the people who are feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic most deeply.

By expediting your work and delivering the Final Report three weeks in advance of the deadline, you gave the B.C. Government valuable time before the end of 2020 to make headway on some of your recommendations. We understand the urgency facing the sector and are committed to moving forward as quickly as possible.

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In the spirit of continuing to work in partnership, on December 22, 2020, I was pleased to be able to announce we are allocating a total of \$105 M to provide emergency relief to the tourism sector. This includes \$5 M in emergency grant funding to be administered by Indigenous Tourism BC and \$100 M in dedicated tourism specific funding through the Small-and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant Program. My colleague, the Honourable Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery, and Innovation, has also made significant improvements to the eligibility criteria of the Small-and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant Program, enabling more tourism businesses to benefit from this program. I am hopeful that this dedicated relief funding will help tourism operators survive through the winter and preserve tourism and hospitality jobs until travel can resume.

I worked quickly to take action on the first three recommendations outlined in your report, and in part this was made possible by the clarity of your analysis about what is needed most now, and what we can do to support a strong recovery in the months ahead. I have asked Ministry staff to work with their colleagues across government to explore your remaining recommendations and consider the best way to support business operators, workers and communities as we move towards recovery and eventually resiliency.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my deep gratitude for your collaboration and openness. It is my commitment to you that we continue to work in partnership in support of B.C.'s tourism industry.

Sincerely,



Melanie Mark
Hli Haykwhl Wii Xsgaak
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

pc: Brenda Baptiste
Indigenous Tourism BC

Rob Harris
Royal Roads University

Ingrid Jarrett
British Columbia Hotel Association

Walt Judas
Tourism Industry Association

pc: Glenn Mandziuk
Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association

Richard Porges
Destination British Columbia

Nancy Small
Tourism Richmond

Amy Thacker
Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association

Gavin McGarrigle
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Stephanie Smith
British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union