

The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford:

As Canada begins implementing plans to reopen the economy, we believe it is paramount that, in coordination with the federal government, each province and territory take immediate steps to coordinate and facilitate the restart of Canada's tourism and travel sector. This sector, which supports 1.8 million workers across the country including 391,000 jobs in Ontario,<sup>1</sup> has been devastated by the pandemic and urgent action must be taken to prevent long-lasting economic and job impacts, some of which will be permanent if the situation is not rectified. Without a coordinated restart plan there will unfortunately be serious and lasting damage.

Hotels, airlines, airports, travel agencies, resorts and venues, restaurants and local retailers in each region of the country are part of the travel and tourism ecosystem and have been essentially shut down as a result of the pandemic, the border and travel restrictions, and quarantine arrangements.

We are reaching out directly in our capacity as leaders in the tourism and travel sector experienced in hosting travellers safely in our respective industries. We have proven our ability to adapt to ever-changing security, public health and safety needs. Our success in helping to rebuild public confidence was never more evident than in the aftermath of 9/11 and post-SARS. When faced with adversity and challenge, the travel and tourism sector has stepped up to embrace change, be nimble, and work with government to find solutions. The challenge today is no different.

As an industry, we fully support the efforts that have been made to ensure that the health and safety of all Canadians remains the first priority and recommend that the reopening of the travel sector be executed with strong health and safety standards and in collaboration with government guidance. We believe that with the health and safety protocols each of us have implemented in our respective businesses we can now safely reopen.

At the moment, there are significant variations in the rules between provinces that apply to travel and travellers. Provinces vary on whether to allow out-of-province visitors, on mandatory self-isolation for visitors, and other rules that are collectively resulting in a confused and reluctant public. As the Canadian economy begins to reopen, this will become increasingly cumbersome to navigate for both the public and our industry. There must be a way to streamline our approach and to encourage safe travel.

For many in our sector, the summer travel season generates a disproportionate amount of our annual revenues given the geography and climate in Canada. Additionally, without clear direction on reopening borders and removing quarantine restrictions, the meetings and events business will not only be impacted this summer and fall but possibly into 2021 as a result of businesses reticent about booking long lead time events without clear government direction. We propose to work closely with your government to responsibly take the necessary steps, including additional bio-security measures if appropriate, to ensure that the upcoming summer travel season is not entirely lost for Canadians or the industry. To that end, we urgently request a meeting with you and relevant ministers as well as with the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee, as soon as possible, to discuss a plan of action.

The highly restrictive measures in place today are not sustainable. Like the government, we want to avoid a second wave of the virus and are certain reasonable measures can be taken to help mitigate risk. It is possible to achieve these same goals with targeted, carefully considered measures.

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<sup>1</sup> Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO)

Stay-at-home orders have been in place for many weeks and the rules and pace of economic reopening across provinces and territories vary greatly and are being implemented inconsistently. Canadians are justifiably contemplating travel this summer but remain uncertain about the end-to-end travel experience, with confusion about border restrictions, travel advisories, quarantine rules as well as rules at airports, hotels, and on airplanes. Some clarity and consistency in this regard will be key to any hope that the summer tourism season can be salvaged.

It is important to note that even if the decision was made to lift restrictions on travel today, the lead time required to call back staff, and reopen facilities with new safety protocols would be considerable. Because of the cancellation of festivals, tours, conventions and other events scheduled for this summer, even lifting travel controls would not result in activity at anywhere near normal levels. However, each day that passes without a timetable for easing restrictions guarantees further loss of businesses, jobs and tax revenue throughout Canada.

### Our Commitment

As industry leaders we have worked diligently to prepare actionable health and safety protocols for our own businesses to reopen. Working together, we will develop and coordinate a comprehensive plan to ensure public safety and enable Canadians to connect with family and friends across the country once again, as well as to salvage a portion of Canada's all-important summer tourism season.

We have recently launched the Tourism Roundtable to spearhead and coordinate these efforts. The Roundtable is comprised of leaders in Canada's tourism and travel sector – airports, airlines, hotels and others – working together with a goal of restarting the sector safely and smoothly. Although Canadians will be hearing more from us in the coming weeks, some of the measures our members have already taken to protect Canadian travellers include the following:

- Major airlines have taken industry-leading steps to ensure safe and healthy flights, including temperature checks, installing HEPA filters on planes, implementing clean cabin initiatives such as electrostatic spraying and mandatory passenger safety routines, requiring the use of face coverings and providing individual sanitization kits. See example: <https://www.aircanada.com/ca/en/aco/home/book/travel-news-and-updates/2020/cleanareplus.html>
- Airports have introduced significant disinfecting programs, implemented social distancing measures, mandatory mask wearing requirements, and in some cases, where appropriate and possible, have been proactively managing the flow of passengers throughout their facilities. See example: <https://www.torontop Pearson.com/en/notices/coronavirus>
- As the Canadian lodging sector readies itself to welcome guests back to their hotels and increase guest confidence, the Hotel Association of Canada, in partnership with the American Hotel and Lodging Association, has developed enhanced health and safety protocols and launched the *Safe Stay* initiative. *Safe Stay* sets out North American industry-wide health and safety protocols to ensure the safety of guests and employees. All major hotel brands and hotel companies in Canada have signed and adopted the *Safe Stay* initiative with most exceeding these protocols and requiring hospital grade cleaning protocols and technologies. See: <https://www.hacsafestay.com/>
- The Canadian business events sector has been convening multiple task forces to design made-in-Canada, large venue protocols to ensure that gathering of larger groups will be done in a safe fashion. This will ensure that group travel can return and be hosted in health-conscience facilities with the highest level of operator excellence.

Our industry is committed to working together to quickly develop and implement additional changes required to build the trust of the travelling public while keeping Canada safe. While our members are ready to play their part, in order for our recovery to be successful, the Ontario government must take a leadership role to immediately establish clear and consistent health standards and protocols that are aligned with global rules and procedures and designed to build traveller confidence.

We urge the government of Ontario to act quickly; our viability and future survival depends upon it.

Sincerely,



Beth Potter, President and CEO, Tourism Industry Association of Ontario



Paul Burns, President and CEO, Canadian Gaming Association



Rocco Rossi, President and CEO, Ontario Chamber of Commerce



Peter Cerda, Regional Vice President, The Americas, International Air Transport Association



Bridgitte Anderson, President and CEO, Greater Vancouver Board of Trade



Lydia Chen, President and CEO, InnVest Hotels



Perrin Beatty, President and CEO, Canadian Chamber of Commerce



Don Cleary, President, Marriott Hotels of Canada, Marriott International



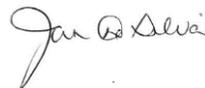
Scott Beck, President and CEO Tourism Toronto



Zita Cobb, Founder and Innkeeper, Fogo Island Inn



Charlotte Bell, President and CEO, Tourism Industry Association of Canada



Janet de Silva, President and CEO, Toronto Board of Trade

Robert J. Deluce, Executive Chairman, Porter Airlines

Susie Grynol, President and CEO, Hotel Association of Canada (HAC)

Jean-Marc Eustache, President and CEO, Transat A.T., Inc.

Goldy Hyder, President and CEO, Business Council of Canada

Jim Facette, Executive Director, Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums

Yves Lalumière, Président and CEO- Tourisme Montréal

Christiane Germain, Co-President , Germain Hotels

Michel Leblanc, President and CEO, Greater Montreal Chamber of Commerce

Daniel-Robert Gooch, President and CEO, Canadian Airports Council (CAC)

Heather McCrory, CEO North & Central America, Accor

Clark Grue, Chair, Meetings Mean Business Canada

Mike McNaney, President and CEO, National Airlines Council of Canada (NACC)



Wendy Paradis, President of the Association of  
Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA)



Steve Sammut, President and CEO, Rocky  
Mountaineer



Joseph D. Randell, President and CEO, Chorus  
Aviation Inc.



Ed Sims, President and CEO, WestJet



Calin Rovinescu, President and CEO, Air  
Canada

cc: The Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health  
The Honourable Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance  
The Honourable Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation  
The Honourable Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade  
The Honourable Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries