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CANADA'S TOURISM AND TRAVEL INDUSTRY LAUNCHES RECOVERY PLAN CAMPAIGN TO SAVE ONE OF CANADA'S ECONOMIC DRIVERS

Industry needs comprehensive government support to ensure sector's post-pandemic survival

June 5, 2020 (Ottawa) – With provinces advancing their reopening plans, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) today launched a broad, industry-developed recovery campaign that seeks sector-specific government support to ensure Canada has a tourism industry post-pandemic.

"Canada's visitor economy was the first-hit and hardest-hit industry from the COVID pandemic, and will be one of the last to recover. That is why we've done the important work to put together a very detailed plan to present to government on what they can do to help support this important sector now and in the months to come to ensure that our industry is able to recover," said Charlotte Bell, President and CEO of TIAC. "Tourism and travel accounts for over 1.8 million jobs in Canada – that's nearly 1 in every 10. Since the onset of the pandemic, over 800,000 jobs in our sector have been lost and many will never return without critical recovery support."

As Canada's 5th largest sector, the visitor economy contributes over \$102 billion to Canada's economy on an annual basis, and accounts for over 2% of GDP. Pre-pandemic, the visitor economy was an important economic engine, including a meetings and conventions sector contributing more than \$30 billion to the economy. In 2019, Canada welcomed a record 22.1 million international visitors and was on a trajectory of growth. The tourism recovery plan launched today outlines recommendations and proposals for government that span from immediate to longer-term proposals. "The tourism sector will not rebound as quickly as other sectors," explained Bell. "The federal government has spent a considerable amount of energy investing in growing our sector before the onset of the virus, including rolling out a new Tourism Growth Strategy in the 2019 federal budget and appointing tourism as Canada's 7th Economic Strategy Table. Canada cannot afford to lose the tourism industry."

While current support measures are welcomed and appreciated, they all have expiry dates that will not meet the unique situation of the sector long-term. "Without tourists or local visitors, the tourism industry has grinded to a complete halt and the industry's more-than 200,000 businesses are facing a dire situation as we enter what should have been the start of Canada's peak-tourism season," added Bell. "While programs like the CEWS and the CERB have been helpful, long-term liquidity is key because most of our sector's businesses are losing out on an entire year's worth of revenue that is typically earned during the peak travel season between May and September. The recently announced \$70 million for tourism in redirected funds to support domestic marketing initiatives and a number of regional destination marketing organizations is a step in the right direction. Our recovery proposal launched today outlines the additional support needed for long-term recovery of the sector."

The actions taken to curb COVID-19 such as the closure of Canada's borders to international visitors, suspension of international flights around the world, and the shutdown of convention centres, attractions, restaurants and entertainment venues have disproportionately impacted the tourism and travel industry. The almost total halt of tourism activity resulting in massive job losses, hotel closures and precipitous cancellations of events of all kinds will stretch for years to come.

“We are ready to engage in meaningful dialogue with Government on how we can collaborate on reopening the visitor economy and ensure support for a recovery period that will last longer for this sector,” said Bell.

Visit TourismCounts.ca for the full document

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