



May 21, 2021

Statement of Support for Indigenous Tourism in Canada

Over the past few weeks, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) has been speaking with government officials about the allocations of support for our industry announced in the federal budget. One such area is support for the Indigenous tourism industry.

In TIAC's 2021 Recovery Plan, we note that "It is important to note that, Indigenous tourism operators have disproportionately fallen outside the criteria of Government relief measures. To protect viable businesses in this emerging sector, it is vital that an Indigenous lens be placed on all recovery measures." This observation is still true today.

In the Fall Economic Statement 2020, Minister Freeland stated that "We will do whatever it takes to help Canadians stay healthy, safe, and solvent. We will invest in every necessary and helpful public health measure. We will support Canadian families and Canadian businesses, in a deliberate, prudent and effective way."

Prime Minister Trudeau has also acknowledged that "inequality makes our economy less resilient which is why a robust and complete recovery must leave no one behind...that lost opportunities for racialized Canadians and Indigenous peoples are restored..."

The Indigenous Tourism industry has suffered in much the same ways as any other tourism business in Canada since the onset of the pandemic. They have lost revenues, had to release staff, and despite this have had to continue to cover fixed costs associated with their business. Some of these businesses are on reserve and thus may not have a CRA number due to their tax status. This has made it very difficult for indigenous tourism business owners to benefit from government funding supports such as the wage and rent relief programs.

Addressing these unique needs and championing the recovery effort is the industry itself through its industry led associations. At the national level that is the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada. ITAC, along with its members have developed a Recovery Plan that focuses on solvency, recovery and rebuilding this important section of our Canadian tourism economy. At TIAC, we believe that this industry planned approach is worthy of consideration by government, and encourage the Indigenous Services Canada and the Ministry of Economic Development & Official Languages to review this plan and find ways to work with the indigenous tourism industry to ensure their recovery, their ongoing viability, and their place in our recovery.