

May 26, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

As Canada begins implementing plans to reopen the economy, we believe it is paramount that the federal government take immediate steps to coordinate and facilitate the restart of Canada's tourism and travel sector. This sector, which provides 1.8 million jobs, has been devastated by the pandemic and urgent action must be taken to prevent long-lasting economic and job impacts. While providing wage subsidies and bridge financing to some companies in the sector are helpful stop-gap measures, without a coordinated restart plan to stimulate demand, there will unfortunately be serious and lasting damage.

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.

We recognize and appreciate that governments have been hard at work to put in place measures to protect the public as we battle COVID-19. We acknowledge the need to prevent and mitigate a potential second wave of transmission. Indeed, many companies in the travel and tourism sector have already begun to put health and safety measures in place and are ready to work with government to rebuild public confidence. In short, 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.

Other countries, recognizing the unique value and economic contributions of their travel and tourism sectors, have already announced their intention to save the summer travel season. Regions have widely varying rates of transmission, and this means that travel should not face blanket restrictions irrespective of context. The European Commission recently unveiled an action plan to reopen borders, restart the hospitality sector, and re-establish key air, sea and train links, by putting in place a framework detailing key health and safety protocols. This approach will contribute to saving millions of jobs and restarting local economies in an orderly and progressive manner. In addition, the Australian government, through Tourism Australia, has launched an aggressive campaign to promote travel within its borders. Its 'Live from Aus' campaign, launched last weekend, is a direct marketing effort to reinvigorate interest in domestic 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 the federal 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 soon as possible, to discuss a plan of action.

We have five asks:

1. Develop clear and uniform standards for the safety of travellers and the prevention of COVID-19 transmission through a partnership of government and members of the travel industry. These could include new processes for screening travellers, taking advantage of rapid advances in relevant technologies, and other clear and uniform measures to ensure safety that are easy for travellers to understand.
2. Work with provincial governments to safely remove inter-provincial travel restrictions currently in place to allow Canadians to visit friends and loved ones and explore our country this summer.
3. Continue to assess the efficacy of restrictions on non-essential travel from the United States for any purpose: the twice extended border restriction runs until June 21 and currently discourages all visitors.
4. Thoughtfully ease international travel restrictions based on what is being done in other jurisdictions around the world, notably the European Union; the current blanket restriction applies to all foreign nationals entering Canada, runs to June 30, and it seems likely that it will be extended.
5. In concert with public health professionals and where appropriate, replace the current universal 14-day quarantine for those arriving in Canada with measures that permit international arrivals without quarantine except in instances where travellers have been in a high-risk jurisdiction in the previous two weeks. This would be consistent with what is being done in other countries. The current provisions have effectively put an end to international tourist and business travel to Canada.

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.

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

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.torontopearson.com/en/notices/coronavirus>
- Across the country, hotels have relaxed cancellation policies, implemented frequent and rigorous cleaning regimens, including new cleaning technologies, introduced social distancing spacing signage, and encouraged greater use of digital tools for check-in to promote distancing options for guests. See example: <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 Canadian Government – Transport Canada, the Canada Border Services Agency, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority and the Public Health Agency of Canada – 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 Canadian government to act quickly; our viability and future survival depends upon it.

Sincerely,



Charlotte Bell, President and CEO, Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC)



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



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



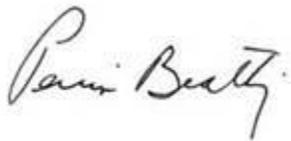
Wendy Paradis, President of the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA)



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



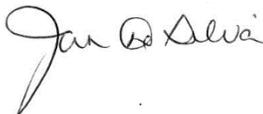
Clark Grue, Chair, Meetings Mean Business Canada



Perrin Beatty, President and CEO, Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC)



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



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



Yves Lalumière, Président and CEO- Tourisme Montréal



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



Scott Beck, President and CEO Tourism Toronto

cc: The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister
The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport
The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages
The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade