

July 31, 2020



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Honourable Stephen McNeil
Office of the Premier
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Dear Premier McNeil,

We have been reading of late, your Government's concern for the Nova Scotia tourism industry and we appreciate your recognition of the significant impact COVID-19 has and is continuing to have. Your reference to the tourism industry needing open borders to recoup business will be an obvious part of the solution, at the appropriate time. However, many operators are very concerned that not enough has been done to encourage regional travel and instill confidence.



In speaking with our counterpart in New Brunswick, the industry is reporting an immediate and significant increase in reservations as a result of the travel incentive program announced for New Brunswick residents. We believe a similar incentive for Nova Scotia will drive economic activity and rebates will keep dollars in the provincial economy. TIANS is also leading a coalition of Industry associations across Canada, to seek a federal incentive program.

Tourism is at the centre of the pandemic and will be at the centre of the recovery. In order to facilitate business activity, a number of factors will influence the ability for Tourism to reactivate in a significant way. Tourism is Nova Scotia's largest service export and incenting provincial travel to mitigate the current loss of international and broader domestic markets will ensure existing businesses are structurally and financially in a better position for a larger economic reopening.

Prior to the pandemic, 40,000 people were employed in Nova Scotia's tourism industry (Stats Canada). During the first three months more than 12,000 jobs were lost in tourism (Tourism HR Canada). A tax incentive program is a way the Province can help the Industry rebuild and protect the remaining tourism jobs.

People need to have a sustained level of confidence and sense of safety. Your Government can support the tourism industry in Nova Scotia substantially by aligning on joint efforts and messaging. The travel tax credit is one option that your Government has publicly dismissed and we would implore you to reconsider the broad impact a travel tax credit would have on the general confidence of Nova Scotians to travel and rediscover their home province.

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Countries around the world are looking at policy options to ignite their tourism economies and travel tax credits are being used as a practical and smart approach to generate revenue and build consumer confidence. It is difficult for us to understand why the Government of Nova Scotia will not support Nova Scotia's tourism industry through this policy adjustment that will have an immediate and sustained impact on the provincial economy.

Tourism is a main street industry; for every \$1 spent in tourism another \$3.2 is generated in the economy. It has the highest multiplier effect of any sector and is in every Nova Scotia community. Since the reopening on July 5th, we have been working with hundreds of tourism operators; assisting with their current priorities including grappling with re-establishing business, implementing new operating protocols, visitor screening, and keeping staff and customers safe.

Premier, we need help now to spark the tourism economy – and would ask that your Government announce a travel tax incentive program for Nova Scotians immediately. We believe with current marketing efforts and a plan for the Fall to extend the season, we can generate significant tourism revenue. This is what the industry is asking for.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Judy Saunders
TIANS Chair


Darlene Grant Fiander
TIANS President

cc Honourable Geoff MacLellan, Business Minister
TIANS Board of Directors
Tourism Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia MLA's