



August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021

TIANS Board of Directors

By email: [tians@tourism.ca](mailto:tians@tourism.ca)

Dear Members of the TIANS Board of Directors:

**Re: Election 2021 – Tourism Strong**

Thank you for your correspondence in the above noted matter. Please see below for the answers to your questions.

**Given the challenges facing the Tourism Sector would your Party commit to a dedicated Minister responsible for Tourism to take on the vast work that needs to be done in rebuilding the industry?**

The Liberal government is always open to considering new ways to deliver programs and services to key stakeholders if improved efficiency and responsiveness can be achieved. The tourism sector took a major hit in 2020 and returning it to pre-pandemic levels will be an important goal for a Liberal government. Conversations on how best to achieve that will be held with important stakeholders like TIANS.

**If your party forms government, what specific actions will you take to rebuild the Tourism economy and assist the sector reach its economic potential?**

Our government recently committed \$18.2 million on the Tourism Restart Program to help Nova Scotia tourism operators with grant programs and marketing support. This program includes:

- \$10.5 million for the Tourism Accommodations Restart Program to help fund advertising, incentive packages to encourage overnight stays and customer focused amenities upgrades;
- \$2 million for the Small Tourism Operators Restart program, which includes campgrounds, outdoor adventure operators, sightseeing or scenic operators, travel agencies and others;
- \$710k for free admission fees for entry into all 28 locations in the Nova Scotia museum system;
- \$2 million to sponsor outdoor events and attractions;
- \$3 million in extra money for tourism marketing, increasing the total budget for the next year to \$5.8 million; and
- \$1 million earmarked for marketing campaigns targeting the Atlantic provinces.

A re-elected Rankin government has also committed an additional \$5 million for the Tourism Digital Assistance Fund, which helps fund digitization of tourism businesses for things such as websites, e-commerce solutions and online booking solutions.



**How would your government support the rebuild of a skilled Tourism Workforce as the industry rebounds in a post-pandemic economy? How will immigration factor into your strategy?**

A re-elected Rankin government has committed an additional \$69 million in funding for the Nova Scotia Community College to increase the number of seats available to train skilled workers. We believe that NSCC plays a vital role in training skilled tourism workers and a re-elected Rankin government will continue to work with businesses in all sectors to ensure a well trained, qualified workforce is available.

We are fast approaching a population of one million Nova Scotians. Thanks to continued and consistent efforts by the Liberal government to grow our population through creating nominee programs for skilled labour and on demand trades. A Rankin Government will commit \$10.3 million over the next four years to ensure that skilled immigrants and international graduates stay in Nova Scotia once they've entered the workforce. By increasing settlement supports, we can ensure that our businesses are able to retain the skilled workers they need to build and grow.

**What innovative policies and supports would your government implement to help industry foster a robust, four-season tourism economy?**

Our government believes that expanding the number of tourists that come to Nova Scotia in what is traditionally the tourism off-season is a key component to reaching the Ivany goal of doubling Nova Scotia's tourism revenues. A re-elected Rankin government will work with industry to determine what role government can play in the expansion of the tourism season.

In the last five years, camping parks have experienced a 31 percent increase in overnight bookings. COVID-19 created new pressures as demand increased. The Liberal government is committed to extending camping season where possible and to improvements that can enhance visitor experiences.

With our partners the Liberal government has been strategically investing in improvements to Nova Scotia's Iconic tourist sites to attract tourists and ensure they have the best experience possible.

The Liberal Party is open to ongoing consultations and discussions with our partners on creative, innovative ways to extend our tourism season all year round.

**Considering the interconnectivity of tourism and the environment what sustainable policies and commitments will your government make to protect Nova Scotia's unique natural assets?**

A re-elected Rankin government will prioritize the protection of the environment and combat climate change. A re-elected Rankin government has committed to 80% of all of Nova Scotia's energy from renewables by 2030, powering all government buildings through renewable energy by 2025 via the Green Choice program and protecting 17 percent of Nova Scotia's land for conservation.

We are committing \$20 million over 4 years to the Blue Route— a province-wide project to create a network of bicycling infrastructure. Active transportation routes for cycling, walking and other forms of



non-emitting transportation are essential for healthy communities and attract interest from the growing adventure tourism industry.

We are also committing to investing in our provincial parks which we know are becoming increasingly popular for tourists and Nova Scotians alike. A re-elected Liberal government will make our provincial park system a priority, investing \$15 million over four years for major upgrades. These transformational investments will include more serviced sites, new trails, accessible and gender-neutral comfort stations while also doubling the annual funding available for routine infrastructure improvements.