
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts
Council of Tourism Associations B.C.

PROVINCE, INDUSTRY COMMIT TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

VANCOUVER – British Columbia’s tourism organizations are taking major steps to ensure the long-term sustainability of the industry, Tourism, Culture and the Arts Minister Bill Bennett announced in Vancouver today. The Province, industry organizations and businesses have contributed \$560,000 to create a new BC Partnership for Sustainable Tourism.

“This partnership shows the power of collaboration between government and industry in taking action on climate change, while ensuring the future sustainability of the industry,” said Bennett, speaking at the international Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Conference today. “By taking a long-term view, we are helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions and building a competitive advantage for ‘Super, Natural’ B.C. as travellers increasingly factor into their vacation and travel plans the destination’s commitment to the natural environment.”

The BC Partnership for Sustainable Tourism will:

1. Establish best practices for sustainability specific to tourism businesses;
2. Develop and implement a certification program for “green” tourism operators;
3. Set up a system for tracking and reporting sustainable tourism indicators;
4. Offer practical carbon calculators for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises;
5. Embark on communications and outreach for businesses and travellers; and
6. Hold workshops across the province to educate businesses on carbon emission strategies and best practices.

“The partnership will help our province's tourism businesses and communities respond more effectively to a rapidly changing world,” said Stephen Regan, president and CEO of the Council of Tourism Associations (COTA) BC. “The tourism industry understands that rising to the challenges of social responsibility and environmental stewardship creates a more resilient tourism product. This is an industry that can make a difference – that ‘gets it’.”

“As business owners, we inject a bias for action and progress into the collaborative approach to sustainable tourism,” said Dave Butler, co-chair of the BC Sustainable Tourism Collective, a coalition of tourism businesses. “This partnership will offer real action steps in a reasonable time frame – with a tangible return on the tourism industry’s social, environmental and economic investments.”

The partnership has received initial funding of \$560,000 from:

- The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Climate Action Secretariat and Tourism BC: \$460,000;
- Industry associations, including COTA and Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC, Tourism Vancouver, BC Hotel Association and the BC Sustainable Tourism Collective: \$100,000.

The partnership will be incorporated as a non-profit society solely focused on enhancing the sustainability of B.C.'s tourism industry.

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