



Federal Election Call To Action

Friday, September 12, 2008

COTA is working with its national affiliate, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) and our over 50 member associations across B.C. to help federal politicians (and would-be politicians) understand that “**Tourism Matters**” in Canada.

Canada is losing its competitive edge. We need federal leaders to understand that ‘tourism matters’ and that we need them take greater interest and bolder action to support our development.

Tourism has not been a high enough priority for our federal governments. Tourism as an industry is not on the ‘radar’ as a major economic contributor in this country. We suffer because we are so diverse (spanning many sectors) and dominated by small and medium sized operations (many businesses are less than 20 employees). Still, our strength is in our numbers. We will be heard with a unified voice.

Tune into national party messages. Can you detect an appreciation of tourism as a major industry worthy of acknowledgement. Does tourism receive any specific policy attention? From COTA’s perspective, there is a need for a bolder vision for tourism in Canada and a need for stronger leadership at the federal level to remove impediments to tourism development.

What can my Association / Company Do?

1. **Commit.** Decide for yourself that ‘tourism matters’ enough to you to get involved in the political process. Our strength is in our numbers (tourism supports over 650,000 full-time jobs in Canada) but we are very diverse and largely employed in small and medium sized businesses. Unity is critical to our collective success.
2. **Be Informed.** Make use of the materials provided by COTA www.cotabc.com and TIAC www.tiac.travel in our respective Federal Election Toolkits. The attached ‘Tourism Matters’ fact sheet is a quick guide to the numbers.
3. **Take Action.** Introduce yourself to candidates as a tourism professional. Share any part of this kit with those campaigning in your community. For more specific information on policy areas, get the COTA Federal Issues Book at www.cotabc.com. Contact candidates’ offices with the “Tourism Matters” fact sheet (see next page). Make your views known to your local media (print, radio, television) and utilize new media (i.e., Internet blogs, email lists, etc.). Encourage your tourism colleagues to communicate our “Tourism Matters” message.



'TOURISM MATTERS'

Fact Sheet

Tourism Creates Thousands of High Quality Jobs

- In 2007, tourism supported 654,100 full-time jobs. Just over 10% of the national workforce.
- In B.C. there are 131,000 direct jobs attributed to tourism.
- Tourism and hospitality jobs fill a range of employment needs in our communities: from part-time and seasonal jobs permanent to full-time careers with executive pay, such as hotel managers (\$86K/yr ++), marketing managers (\$68K/yr ++), and chefs (\$69K/yr +).

Tourism Generates Wealth

- Tourism generated \$10.2 billion in visitor spending in B.C. in 2007, making it the second-largest industry in B.C. In Canada, tourist spending reached \$70.6 billion in 2007.
- Canada boasts more than 180,000 tourism-related businesses. In B.C. we have approximately 18,000 tourism-related businesses. Tourism business opportunities can help rural communities smooth out the bumps experienced through economic transitions.
- In 2006, tourism spending generated \$19.4 billion in tax revenues.

Tourism is Losing its Competitive Edge

- Since 2000, Canada's overall market share of global tourist arrivals has decreased approximately 24%, while overall global tourist arrivals have increased.
- Between 2002 and 2006 Canada dropped from 7th overall in the world for tourist arrivals, to 12th overall.

What can be Done? (specific actions that would help)

1. **Enhance air access to Canada.** Improve the ability of foreign airlines to bring tourists to Canada, by signing more Open Skies Agreements with our major tourism markets overseas.
2. **Encourage businesses that want to bring visitors to Canada.**
 - Increase resources to the Canada Border Services Agency to facilitate the hiring of the correct number of customs agents to reduce line-ups and allow placement of agents and equipment in ways that support new and expanding services into Canada.
 - Substantially reduce rents charged to airports by the federal government, and reduce other excessive aviation costs, such as fuel excise taxes and security charges.
3. **Invest in telling Canada's story internationally through the Canadian Tourism Commission.** Discretionary service industries depend on marketing to create and sustain demand. CTC funding has fallen from \$98.6 million in 2001 to \$76.5 million in 2008.
4. **Re-establish an effective, efficient and accountable GST rebate program.** To be globally competitive, non-resident visitors to Canada need to receive the GST rebate on the purchases of accommodation and other goods.