



## **TOURISM INDUSTRY CALL TO ACTION**

Resources to Assist Tourism Organizations in  
Accelerating the Recovery, Sustainable Growth &  
Resilience of Alberta's Visitor Economy



# INDEX

## BACKGROUND

The attached documents have been assembled to assist your organization in advancing the key recommendations contained in the report Call to Action: Recommendations to Accelerate the Recovery, Sustainable Growth & Resilience of Alberta’s Visitor Economy. Every outreach effort to your local MLA makes a difference and helps to build a grassroots understanding within all facets of government that the visitor economy matters.

- Call to Action - Letter to Your MLA.....Page 1
- Key Messages.....Page 2-3
- Leave Behind Documents
  - COVID-19 Impacts on the Visitor Economy .....Page 4
  - Alberta’s Visitor Economy Defined.....Page 5

*The Tourism Industry Association of Alberta (TIAA) is a not-for-profit, tourism association that advocates on behalf of all segments of Alberta’s tourism economy for a competitive and sustainable business environment that generates substantial economic value for the province.*



# CALL TO ACTION - LETTER TO YOUR MLA

(YOUR LOGO)

(TODAY'S DATE)

DEAR (YOUR MLA'S NAME)

Alberta's visitor economy is facing the most significant and unprecedented challenge in its history. Millions of Albertans, Canadians and international visitors have stopped travelling. Thousands of businesses, large and small, have closed or reduced their services and tens of thousands of employees have already lost their jobs or been laid off.

Alberta's visitor economy is comprised of over 23,000 businesses, most small businesses, and represents over 4% of the total number of businesses in the province. The provincial visitor economy generates approximately 72,500 full-time equivalent jobs, accounting for 3.2% of all full-time equivalent jobs in the province.

In 2017, the visitor economy supported 37 million person visits which was a 6.1% increase over 2016. 30.8 million of these person visits were made by Albertans, 4.1 million were made by Canadians and 2 million by international visitors. 2.3 million room nights were booked at accommodations throughout the province and over 160,000 direct flights arrived in Alberta.

The attached report – A Call to Action: Recommendations to Accelerate the Recovery, Sustainable Growth & Resilience of Alberta's Visitor Economy – is a priority request of the Government of Alberta to support the recovery and growth of Alberta's visitor economy. Presented on behalf of the entirety of Alberta's visitor economy, and representing the input of over 20 sector associations, the report details a comprehensive suite of actions that the government needs to take over the short, medium, and long-term.

While (YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME) greatly appreciates the actions that have already been taken by the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada, much more action will be needed to support the industry's return from the brink, going forward. The actions articulated in this report are about making deliberate and strategic investments in the future of the industry and creating the legislative and policy conditions that will enable the true potential of our visitor economy to be unlocked.

The report recommendations are organized into eight focus areas and prioritized timelines that are summarized in the attached report on pages 44-59. As my MLA, I am asking you to champion the report findings and recommendations to your caucus colleagues, and to Premier Kenney and the Minister of Economic Development, Trade & Tourism, Tanya Fir.

Sincerely,

(YOUR NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION NAME)

Cc: Premier Kenney

Tanya Fir, Minister of Economic Development, Trade & Tourism



# KEY MESSAGES

## 1. Government Action Needed to Support and Sustain Visitor Economy

The survival of Alberta's visitor economy requires timely and ongoing support and funding to sustain the industry until travel can begin to return to normal. It is critical that federal stimulus funding programs continue beyond current timelines on a sliding-scale basis until business revenues return to at least 75% of their pre-COVID-19 levels.

## 2. Open and Entice Visitation

The freedom for visitors to arrive and move about the province is critical to the visitor economy. There is a need to move forward to responsibly and safely remove border and travel restrictions for international travelers from priority international markets that have successfully implemented measures to address the pandemic, and where the risk of transmission of COVID-19 is low. To incentivize the re-scheduling of Alberta-based business events, meetings and conventions, an Alberta Travel Voucher program should be introduced to provide delegates to these events with a \$100 travel voucher to businesses within the visitor economy for events held in 2020 and 2021.

## 3. Lead and Align the Visitor Economy

Alberta's visitor economy needs the provincial government to embrace the industry's potential by ensuring there is a cross-ministry, whole-of-government approach to tourism investment, product development and marketing. A first step would be to create a cross-ministry Tourism Secretariat, accountable to both the Jobs and Economy and the Resource and Sustainable Development Cabinet Policy Committees to lead the cross-ministry coordination and implementation of legislative and policy reforms that will support a \$20B industry by 2030.

## 4. Government's Role in Planning and Management of the Visitor Economy

The growth of Alberta's visitor economy has occurred organically over time. This has led to significant growth in a few select destinations but has led to unrealized potential in many other areas of the province. It is critical that the government review and update the 10-year tourism strategy to ensure its relevant and responsive to the impacts of COVID-19 and supports efforts to grow regional visitor economies through informed planning efforts - such as the development/updating of Destination Management Plans.

## 5. Invest to Create a Stronger Visitor Economy

It has never been more important that there is a concerted investment in the development of tourism infrastructure and the creation of new destinations. The province is fortunate to have several regions with high tourism potential. Steps the government needs to take to move in this direction include the prioritized development of new regional destinations and the introduction of a Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund to fast track planning, design and construction of export-ready, sustainable attractions and experiences.

over...



## KEY MESSAGES...cont'd

### 6. Enable Change through Supportive Policy Framework

Enabling supportive policies, legislation and regulations are fundamental to accelerating the sustainable growth and resilience of Alberta's visitor economy. Public lands and Alberta Parks represent a strong and under-realized opportunity to grow world class sustainable tourism experiences that motivate travel domestically and from around the world. As such, the government needs to modernize all Alberta Parks and relevant public lands legislation, regulations and policies to support and enable world-class, nature-based adventure and indigenous tourism product development.

### 7. Promote the Industry

Marketing and promotion will play an important role in compelling Albertans and domestic markets to experience Alberta. Travel Alberta should devise marketing campaigns to help rebuild host community confidence, entice Albertan's and short-haul interprovincial visitors to travel while also ensuring the province is positioned to rapidly relaunch marketing abroad as travel restrictions are eased and incentive programs are launched.

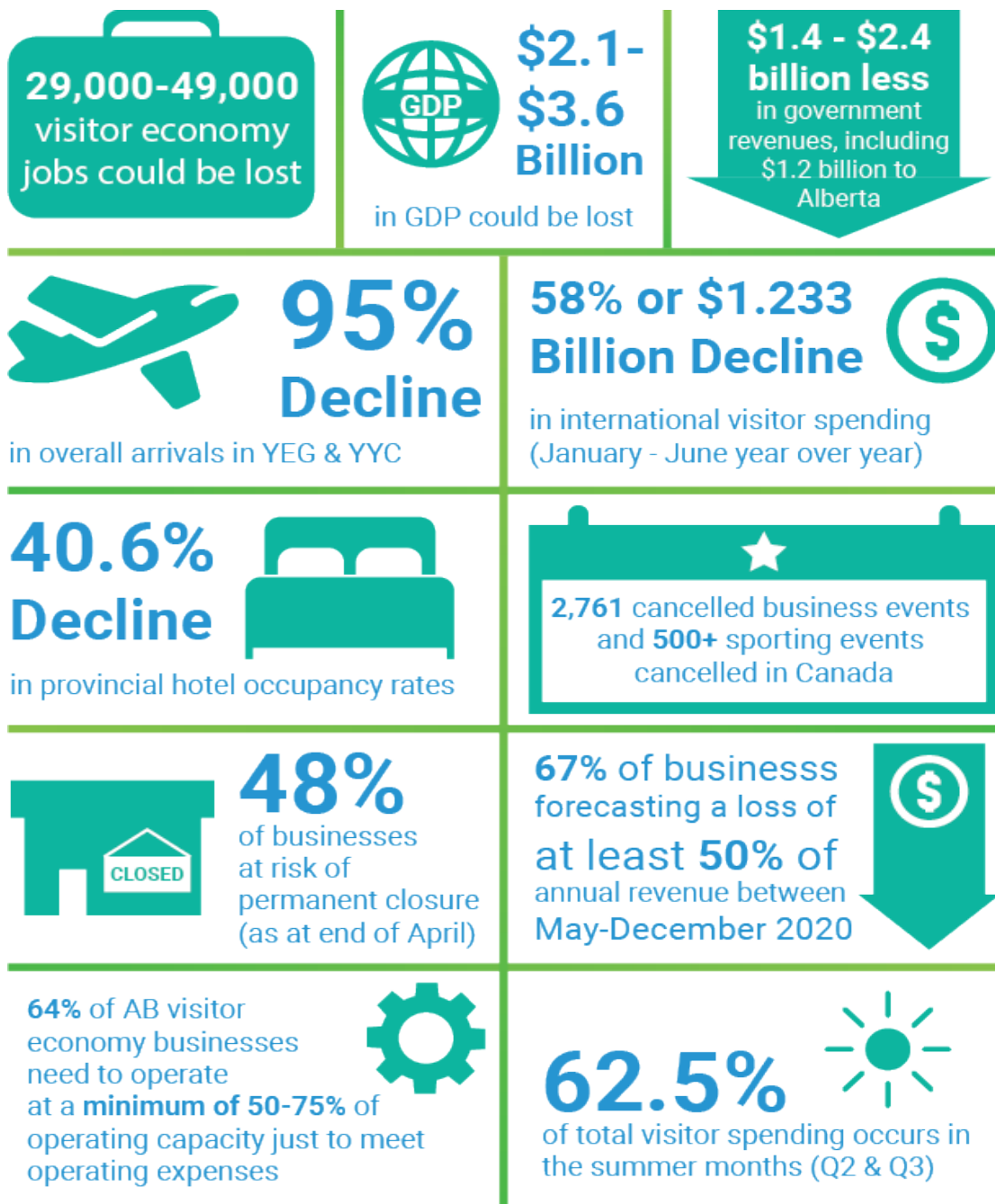
### 8. Understand and Evaluate

Research drives the visitor economy and good decisions require sound data and market intelligence that is timely, accurate and insightful. The industry also requires timely insights on whether the actions they are implementing are working. In this time of uncertainty, timely research and intelligence has never been more critical to enabling the success of the sector. The department of Economic Development Trade & Tourism should ensure Tourism Research staff and Travel Alberta coordinate and disseminate timely market data while ensuring there is an informed understanding of destination performance measures to support future planning, regulatory and investment decisions.

## COVID-19 IMPACTS ON THE VISITOR ECONOMY

The full extent of the pandemic on Alberta's visitor economy is not yet known and will not be for some time. The majority of visitor economy spending occurs in the peak summer season (Q3). The summer season is when most visitor economy businesses generate much of their annual cash flow.

As prospects grow that the 2020 peak summer season will also be deeply impacted due to the restriction on international travel and hesitant and uncertain long-haul domestic travel, many businesses will not be able to generate the cash reserves this summer that they require to bridge until the peak season in 2021.

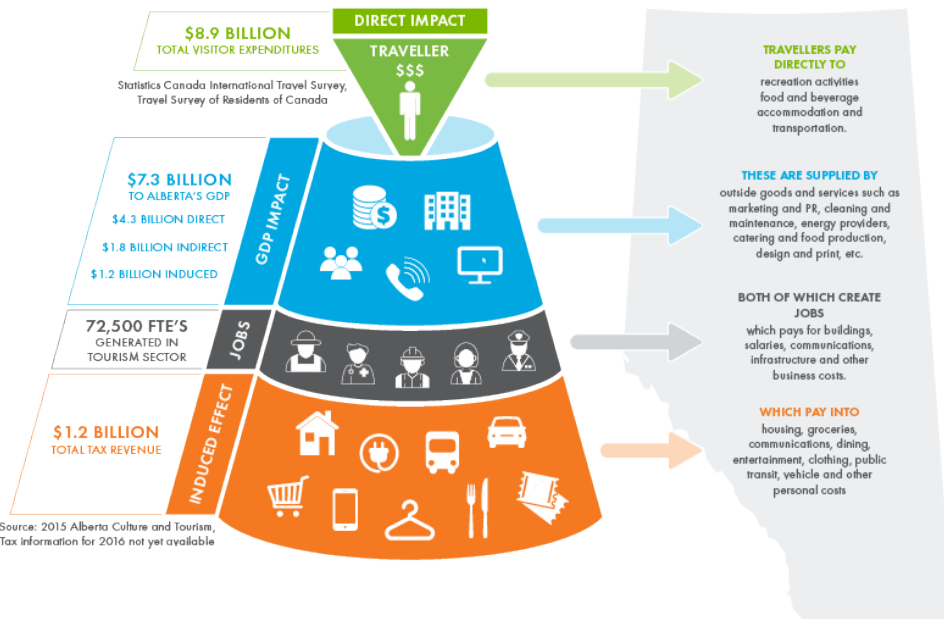


# ALBERTA'S VISITOR ECONOMY DEFINED

*In Alberta, the visitor economy is literally "everyone's business". It is a complex, interwoven and dynamic ecosystem. Driven by economic activity of visitors, the visitor economy is an industry of industries and inclusive of all private and public businesses and service providers that support a visitor's trip.*

Growing faster than the provincial economy and generating over \$8.9 billion in direct visitor expenditures annually, the visitor economy is one of Alberta's most significant economic engines and the backbone of many local and regional economies.

Comprised of over 23,000 businesses, mostly small-to medium-sized enterprises and micro-businesses, Alberta's visitor economy generated over 72,500 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs in 2017, accounting for 3.2% of all FTE jobs in Alberta.



In 2017, the visitor economy supported over 37 million person million person visits, which was a 6.1% increase from the previous year. \$30.8 million of these person visits were made by Albertans, 4.1 million were made by Canadians and 2 million were by international visitors. 2.3 million room nights were booked at accommodations throughout the province and over 160,000 direct flights arrived in Alberta.

