

James McPherson
CEO/Director
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Norman Wells, NT

May 12, 2026

The Honourable Rechie Valdez
Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Honorable Rechie Valdez,

My name is James McPherson, Owner/Operator of Sahtu Adventures, a 100% Indigenous-owned tourism business based in the Sahtu region of the Northwest Territories. I am writing to express my strong support for the [Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada \(ITAC\)](#) and to respectfully urge continued federal investment into Indigenous tourism across Canada.

As someone working directly in Indigenous tourism, I have seen firsthand how important ITAC has been for Indigenous operators, artists, guides, cultural camps, and remote communities. ITAC has done much more than promote tourism. It has helped Indigenous people build businesses, strengthen cultural experiences, create partnerships, and bring Indigenous tourism into the national spotlight while allowing us to remain true to our cultures, values, and traditions.

For many of us, tourism is more than business. It is about revitalizing culture, creating opportunities for our youth, sharing our stories the right way, and building sustainable economies within our own communities. In remote northern regions like the Sahtu, these opportunities are extremely important and can have a direct impact on employment, cultural preservation, and long-term community wellness.

Without organizations like ITAC, many Indigenous tourism operators would lose an important voice, support system, and national connection. The impacts would be felt across Canada, especially in smaller and remote Indigenous communities that already face barriers when trying to grow within the tourism industry.

ITAC has depended heavily on federal government investment to continue this important work and, until fiscal year 2024–2025, operated with balanced budgets despite growing pressures across the tourism sector. However, federal funding has now significantly declined. For fiscal year 2026–2027, ITAC has received \$0.00 for administration or programming support from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED). While Destination Canada has committed \$1.5 million for 2026, this amount represents roughly a 50% reduction from the marketing investments provided to ITAC in 2023, with funding steadily decreasing each year since.

At a time when Canada continues to speak about reconciliation, economic development, and supporting Indigenous-led initiatives, Indigenous tourism must remain a priority. Investing in Indigenous tourism is investing in Indigenous entrepreneurs, cultural preservation, economic reconciliation, and stronger futures for Indigenous communities across this country.

I respectfully encourage your office to continue supporting ITAC who are helping create lasting opportunities for Indigenous people across Canada.

Mahsi (Thanks) for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

James McPherson
Owner/Operator, Sahtu Adventures
Norman Wells, Northwest Territories