



May 8, 2026

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

Dear Minister Valdez,

I am writing as Managing Director of Thrive Tours Inc., a 100% Indigenous-owned ecotourism company based in Baawaating (Sault Ste. Marie), to urge the Government of Canada to restore federal investment in the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and protect its national role.

Thrive Tours would not be where we are today without ITAC. Their funding and programming are the reason a small Indigenous-owned company like ours has been able to acquire proper gear, train our staff, and compete on a level playing field with our non-Indigenous counterparts. That support is the direct reason we have been recognized with provincial, national, and international awards for sustainable tourism — recognition that, in turn, brings visitors and revenue back to Northern Ontario and to Indigenous communities across the country.

The impact of this funding cut is immediate and concrete. Rendez-vous Canada 2026 is being held in our own province this year, and without ITAC's support we will not be able to be present — losing access to the international buyers and partnerships that sustain our business and the Indigenous tourism economy more broadly.

Indigenous tourism is also one of the most direct ways Canada delivers on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action — work this government has committed to advancing:

- Call to Action 92 (Business and Reconciliation) — equitable access to jobs, training, and economic opportunities for Indigenous peoples, and meaningful consultation and respectful relationships with Indigenous communities. ITAC is the national infrastructure that makes this possible for Indigenous tourism businesses.
- Calls to Action 13–14 & 62 (Language and Education) — our programs share Anishinaabe language, teachings, and history with thousands of visitors each year.
- Call to Action 83 (Reconciliation through the Arts) — Indigenous artists, knowledge keepers, and cultural practitioners are central to our experiences and livelihoods.

Indigenous tourism businesses are doing the work of reconciliation every day. The federal government has a responsibility to put its commitments into action — and that means ensuring the national organization that supports us can continue to exist.

I respectfully ask that you act swiftly to renew federal investment in ITAC and safeguard the Indigenous tourism sector that so many small businesses, communities, and visitors rely on.

Miigwetch,

Brad Robinson

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