



INDIGENOUS
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

ASSOCIATION TOURISTIQUE
AUTOCHTONE
DU CANADA

May 18, 2026

Re: Formal Removal of Support in the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada by Indigenous Tourism BC

Good afternoon, PT Partners and Board Members

I write to respond to ITBC Chair Baptiste's recent communication regarding ITBC's withdrawal of support for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC). While Chair Baptiste's email raises several concerns, ITAC's Board believes it is important to address the misrepresentations and inaccuracies and clarify the history behind our relationship.

First, ITAC and ITBC have had no organizational connection for an extended period. Several years ago, ITAC severed its agreement with ITBC due to confidentiality breaches and conflicts of interest involving a former British Columbia board member who participated in ITAC discussions. ITBC has a history of undermining ITAC, such as during an instance in which it misinformed First Nations leadership in British Columbia when, in April 2025, ITBC leadership publicly opposed our new Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund (ITDF). ITAC released a statement at that time, which you may recall. As a result, the BC representative was removed from ITAC's board, and ITBC's involvement with ITAC was terminated. Today, ITBC is not a member according to our annual membership process, and ITBC has rejected all attempts by ITAC to resolve ongoing issues.

The board notes that ITBC's Chair sent this correspondence to all provincial/territorial partners, their board members and, to our knowledge, to a broad list of ITAC members. Rather than signaling a partnership concern, this appears to be a public, organized critique of ITAC.

We remain committed to transparency and to continuing constructive engagement with our partners where appropriate. If there are specific, verifiable concerns, ITAC welcomes the opportunity to address them through proper channels.

In the ITDF context, it is unusual for business-to-business interactions to require vetting by an outside tourism organization. This board has never encountered a scenario in which two businesses must obtain permission from an outside entity to collaborate, including a fund to which businesses contribute to enhance tourism overall. ITBC's claim is unfounded. Reporting funds exchanged between businesses is not within ITBC's purview.

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

333 Seymour, 8th Floor, Vancouver, BC, V6B 5A6

[1-604-362-4678](tel:1-604-362-4678) | info@IndigenousTourism.ca | www.indigenoustourism.ca



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Regarding the Destination Fund, ITBC opposed it, but later adopted a similar approach—using ITAC’s method—while characterizing it as an unfair “tax.” It is not a tax; it is a business agreement between businesses. Despite ITBC’s current claims about transparency, ITAC has published the funding investments for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 on the ITDF website:

[Transparency and Reporting — Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund](#)

ITAC also released these reports publicly and sent them to ITBC. See the attached written reports, and, ironically, ITAC used all generated ITDF funding to offset agreement funding to ITBC throughout those years, with 100% of funds raised in BC sent to ITBC. Due to cash-flow issues in 2025-2026, ITAC had to use all ITDF funding to support operating costs; this is a reality of the reduced federal funding.

ITBC’s ongoing claims against ITAC are false, unsubstantiated, and unsupported by any specific allegations. ITAC did not misuse ITBC’s name or imply ITBC’s involvement or endorsement in any disputes, and ITBC has provided no concrete, specific claims or evidence to support its assertions.

ITAC did not allow ITBC staff to attend IITC in response to ongoing actions by ITBC’s CFO, who has used IITC as a platform to promote their Coalition—an entity that has directly opposed ITAC and sought to undermine ITAC in an attempt to create a new national body. The Coalition has also made disparaging remarks about the ITAC board and staff and has sought to create division. Warning letters were issued but not heeded. An email was sent to the CFO directly outlining the reasons as stated above, why ITBC was not allowed to attend IITC.

The flow-through of federal financial support to Provincial and Territorial Indigenous Tourism Organizations (PTITOs) has declined over the past three years, with ITAC experiencing an 87% reduction in federal funding. While federal investments have waned across various sectors, we believe ITBC’s actions, supported by two others, have undermined the Government of Canada’s confidence to invest in Indigenous tourism for the benefit of all. ITBC has consistently sought meetings with the federal government and key tourism agencies to advocate for the removal of ITAC funding and program support over the last three years.

Regarding the statement that “ITAC representatives are not authorized to represent Indigenous tourism in British Columbia, nor to engage with ITBC stakeholders, partners, or communities in a manner that implies ITBC’s involvement, without ITBC’s prior written consent,” ITAC has never

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implied ITBC involvement in our engagements. ITAC represents Indigenous tourism across Canada, and BC members may join ITAC voluntarily and operate within free enterprise. We have received several letters of support from BC members in the past two weeks and question the mandate of ITBC leadership to continue efforts to remove ITAC.

ITAC remains committed to fully repaying all monies owed. This coming week, the ITAC Executive Committee will meet with the social impact funder to advance funding and move forward. We have long anticipated federal funding reductions and have worked for nearly two years to develop alternative revenue sources. While uncertainty remains, this was the only viable path for ITAC. We urge partners to see ITBC's actions as a deceptive narrative that does not reflect the truth.

Now is the time to support one another and to work with the Government of Canada to ensure there remains a single, strong Indigenous tourism voice—ITAC.

Lá'ŕ"Δ∇·Δ·ᑭ Manâtcihiwewin With Respect

Brenda Holder

Mahikan Trails

Chair Indigenous Tourism Alberta

Vice-Chair Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

Attachments:

- ITAC Official Response
- Indigenous Tourism BC Letter (public letter)
- ITAC Cease and desist
- ITAC email to ITBC rep
- CBC Coverage and Relevant Materials

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