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Adventure Awaits

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Surrey, British Columbia

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The Honourable Rechie Valdez

Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Secretary of State Valdez,

I am writing as the founder of Adventure Awaits (adventureawaits.ca), a Canadian travel media brand with national reach and television credentials including CTV, CBC, and Breakfast Television. Our work is focused on sustainable tourism, family adventure travel, and amplifying the stories of this country's most remarkable destinations. I am writing today to express my strong support for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and to urge your government to restore federal investment in this vital organization.

Through my work in travel media, I have witnessed first-hand the extraordinary richness that Indigenous tourism brings to Canada's identity as a destination. Indigenous-led experiences — from guided wilderness journeys in British Columbia to cultural immersion programs across the country — are not supplementary attractions. They are among the most powerful, authentic, and sought-after offerings Canada has to give the world. ITAC has been the national backbone making that possible, providing the infrastructure, advocacy, and industry support that allows Indigenous tourism operators to reach their full potential.

I am deeply troubled to learn that ITAC is now in crisis. The organization has been forced to lay off its entire team, with its President and CEO working without pay simply to keep the lights on. This did not happen because of organizational failure — it happened because federal funding from both Indigenous Services Canada and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada has been reduced to zero for fiscal year 2026-27. A 100 percent funding cut to an organization that Canada's own federal tourism strategy explicitly names as a partnership priority is not a policy decision; it is a contradiction.

Canada has a genuine opportunity — and a responsibility — to lead the world in Indigenous tourism. Travelers across the globe are seeking meaningful connections, and Indigenous experiences deliver exactly that. But without a functioning national organization to support operators, coordinate with tourism boards, and advocate for the sector, that potential is at risk. The relationships, systems, and momentum that have been built over years cannot simply be paused and restarted. What is lost now will take years to rebuild.

As someone whose platform exists to inspire Canadians and international visitors to explore this country's extraordinary places and people, I know the value of what ITAC protects. I respectfully and urgently ask that your office act to restore meaningful federal investment in ITAC's core operations. The Indigenous tourism sector — and the communities, families, and entrepreneurs it sustains — cannot afford to wait.

Thank you for your time and your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jami Savage

Founder & Editor-in-Chief

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