



Dear Honorable Rechie Valdez,

I am writing on behalf of Grey Eagle Resort & Casino, located on the beautiful Tsuut'ina Nation in Alberta, to express our full support for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and the vital work they continue to do for Indigenous communities, tourism, and hospitality across this country.

The recent news regarding the loss of operational funding for ITAC is both shocking and deeply concerning. While we understand there are financial pressures and difficult decisions being made across many sectors, allowing an organization as important as ITAC to struggle or potentially dissolve would be a tremendous loss for Indigenous tourism, Indigenous business development, and reconciliation efforts across Canada.

ITAC has played an essential role in supporting Indigenous tourism operators, communities, and hospitality organizations from coast to coast to coast. During the COVID-19 pandemic, their leadership, advocacy, and support were invaluable. Through federal and provincial partnerships, they helped many Indigenous tourism businesses navigate one of the most difficult periods our industry has ever faced. Beyond funding support, ITAC also provided guidance, emotional support, leadership, and a sense of unity during an incredibly uncertain time.

Organizations like Grey Eagle Resort & Casino have benefited greatly from the work ITAC has done over the years. They have created opportunities for Indigenous operators to come together through conferences, national gatherings, and tourism initiatives that connect Indigenous leaders, dignitaries, entrepreneurs, hospitality professionals, and corporate partners. These events create meaningful conversations around Indigenous tourism, economic development, culture, partnerships, and reconciliation.

Those relationships and opportunities matter deeply.

Grey Eagle Resort & Casino would not be where it is today without the support, advocacy, and national leadership of organizations like ITAC. Indigenous tourism is far more than an industry — it is a platform for cultural preservation, economic growth, education, storytelling, and community empowerment. It allows Indigenous communities to share who we are with pride while creating opportunities for future generations.

To see ITAC receive zero operational funding is incredibly discouraging for many of us who have worked hard to build strong Indigenous tourism experiences and partnerships across Canada. We need organizations like ITAC to continue leading, supporting, and strengthening Indigenous tourism nationwide.

I respectfully ask that your office and the Government of Canada reconsider this decision and work toward restoring stable operational funding and long-term support for ITAC. Continued partnership and investment are critical to ensuring Indigenous tourism remains strong, sustainable, and globally recognized.

We are proud to stand alongside ITAC and the many Indigenous tourism operators and communities they represent. We hope the federal government will continue this journey with us as a true partner in reconciliation, economic development, and Indigenous success.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Yates', written over a faint horizontal line.

Kevin Yates
Vice President, Tsuut'ina Hospitality
Grey Eagle Resort & Casino
Tsuut'ina Nation, Alberta



May 11, 2026

Ungava Polar Eco-tours Inc.
Kuujuuaq, Nunavik (QC)

To:

The Honourable Rechie Valdez – Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)
House of Commons Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Subject: Letter of Support and Recognition of the National Importance of Indigenous Tourism Industry of Canada

Dear Honourable Secretary Valdez,

On behalf of Ungava Polar Eco-tours, we are pleased to write in strong support of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and to underscore the critical importance of your organization within Canada's tourism, cultural, and economic landscape.

As an Inuit-led tourism operator based in Nunavik, we witness firsthand the transformative power of Indigenous tourism when it is developed, governed, and promoted by Indigenous peoples themselves. ITAC plays a central and irreplaceable role in advancing Indigenous-owned and Indigenous-controlled tourism experiences across the country, while ensuring that authenticity, cultural integrity, and community benefit remain at the core of the industry.

ITAC provides a unified national voice that strengthens the visibility and credibility of Indigenous tourism from coast to coast to coast. This leadership is essential not only for economic development, but also for reconciliation in action—creating opportunities for visitors to engage meaningfully with Indigenous knowledge, histories, and living cultures, while supporting self-determination for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

For northern and remote regions such as Nunavik, the support, advocacy, and sector-wide coordination are particularly significant. Inuit tourism operators face unique challenges related to geography, infrastructure, climate, and access to markets. Through national strategies, partnerships, research, and promotion, your organization ensures that northern Indigenous voices are included in shaping Canada's tourism future in an equitable and sustainable way.

We also recognize the importance of your work in fostering collaboration between Indigenous tourism businesses, governments, and industry partners. By doing so, ITAC contributes to long-term economic resilience, skills development, and intergenerational knowledge transfer within



communities, while elevating Canada's reputation as a global leader in authentic Indigenous tourism.

Ungava Polar Eco-Tours firmly believes that the continued strength and resourcing of ITAC are essential to the growth, sustainability, and integrity of Indigenous tourism in Canada. We respectfully affirm the necessity of your mandate and encourage continued recognition of your role at regional, provincial, territorial, and national levels.

We thank you for your leadership, your commitment to Indigenous communities, and your ongoing efforts to ensure that Indigenous tourism remains Indigenous-led, community-driven, and culturally respectful.

Please accept our sincere support and appreciation.

Respectfully,

Jonathan Grenier
Owner, Operator – Ungava Polar Eco-tours
Kuujuaq, Nunavik, Québec



Wanuskewin Heritage Park
RR #4, Penner Road
Saskatoon, SK S7K 3J7
www.wanuskewin.com

May 15, 2026

Honourable Rechie Valdez,

Re: Support for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

On behalf of Wanuskewin Heritage Park, I am writing to express our strong support for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and its continued leadership in advancing Indigenous tourism across Canada.

Wanuskewin has greatly benefited from the expertise, mentorship, and national leadership provided by ITAC. Their support has contributed to our continued growth and international recognition, including Wanuskewin's journey toward becoming Canada's 23rd UNESCO World Heritage Site. The significance of another UNESCO designation that is also an Indigenous tourism destination cannot be overstated.

ITAC has also been instrumental in supporting the foundation and growth of Indigenous Destinations Saskatchewan, helping foster regional tourism development, incubation opportunities, and mentorship for local Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities.

The work of ITAC strengthens cultural preservation, economic opportunity, and reconciliation through authentic Indigenous-led tourism experiences. We are grateful for their partnership and encourage continued support for their important work.

Sincerely,

Andrew McDonald
Co-Executive Director
Wanuskewin Heritage Park
marketing@wanuskewin.com

From: manager@arcticbayadventures.com <manager@arcticbayadventures.com>

Sent: Friday, May 8, 2026 12:30 PM

To: rechie.valdez@parl.gc.ca

Subject: Indigenous Tourism

Greetings from the Arctic Circle,

I would be happy to outline the success of Arctic Bay Adventures Ltd.

Currently the following are displaying videos that we helped produce from Arctic Bay, Nunavut;

Travel Nunavut,

Destination Canada,

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, and

Destination Nunavut.

In 2025 we issued 42 T-4's for income tax purposes;

41 for Arctic Bay residents,

39 Inuit and NTI Beneficiaries,

3 Non-Inuit

1 Southern (Director)

We are 100% owned by the Hamlet of Arctic Bay.

Please continue to support Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, Indigenous business and Canadian sovereignty by showcasing Canada's Arctic and Indigenous cultures in a positive and productive environment.

Thank you



May 14, 2026

Brett Walker
GM Canada & International Operations
Collette
40 Queen St. S.
Mississauga, ON
L5M 1K3

Melissa Snape
Head of Corporate Citizenship

The Honourable Rechie Valdez
Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, L5M 1K3

Dear Minister Valdez,

As representatives of a Canadian tourism company, we are writing to express our extreme concern about the continued and escalating withdrawal of funding for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC). Federal support has long been the backbone of ITAC's crucial work and the seed capital behind much of the Indigenous tourism sector that has flourished across Canada. A wide range of organizations, including many non-Indigenous, for-profit corporations have long recognized the collective benefit that comes from the growth and prosperity of Indigenous tourism.

The work ITAC leads and the investment it channels into Indigenous tourism strengthens tourism enterprises of all kinds. The entire Canadian tourism industry benefits from a strong and stable indigenous tourism infrastructure. Both inbound and local demand for indigenous tourism is rising rapidly, transforming from a niche market into a major global industry driven by traveller interest in authentic, culturally immersive and sustainable experiences. As a result, tour operators such as Collette increasingly look to incorporate indigenous elements into programming. It has truly become synonymous with the development of a robust Canadian product offering.

ITAC supports Indigenous providers where they are, often in places where no other funding is available. Its efforts naturally advance many United Nations Sustainable Development



Goals, including No Poverty (SDG 1), Decent Work & Economic Growth (SDG 8), and Sustainable Cities & Communities (SDG 11), among many others. As ITAC expands the supply and visibility of Indigenous tourism experiences, demand grows in tandem.

ITAC has been a global leader in Indigenous tourism development. It is widely regarded as a success story and a beacon of hope by countries around the world. Now, the world is watching as federal funding for Indigenous tourism in Canada has been reduced by 87% over the past three years; at a time when the Canadian tourism industry is already facing unprecedented challenges. It is profoundly counterproductive for the federal government to cut funding to ITAC at a moment when so much progress is being made in cultural development, reconciliation, economic growth, and regenerative tourism.

In recognition of the tremendous work ITAC has done to nurture and develop Indigenous tourism nationwide, Collette committed in 2024 to a three-year contribution of \$15,000 per year to the Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund (ITDF). We have already fulfilled \$30,000 of that commitment and our resolve to continue next year and beyond could not be stronger. We ask that your resolve also continues and that you advocate in the strongest way possible for the restoration of funding to this organization and the vital work it does to support the Canadian economy.

We stand firmly with ITAC and the vital work it does. Collette remains committed in Canada and globally to responsible tourism and to driving positive change through our community initiatives, impact moments, and funding grants.

Before irreparable harm is caused to the sector and our indigenous tourism partners, we urge the federal government to remain committed as well and to reconsider its funding strategy.

Brett Walker

Brett Walker

Melissa Snape

Melissa Snape



May 19, 2026

The Honourable Rechie Valdez
Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)

Dear Secretary Valdez,

On behalf of Frontiers North Adventures, I am writing to express our strong support for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and to urge the Government of Canada to renew stable and meaningful investment in Indigenous tourism leadership in Canada.

For nearly four decades, Frontiers North Adventures has operated in Churchill, Manitoba, a community where Indigenous culture, knowledge, and storytelling are inseparable from the visitor experience. Every season, we witness firsthand how tourism can create meaningful economic opportunities while strengthening cultural pride, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and community connection..

Today's travellers are increasingly seeking authentic experiences that connect them to the land and wildlife, and also to the people whose stories are rooted there. Some of our guests' most powerful moments include locking their gaze with a wild polar bear, or dining beneath the northern lights, paired with listening to Indigenous tour operators share their knowledge, traditions, language, and lived experiences of the North. These are the moments visitors remember long after they leave Churchill, and they are the moments that help create understanding and respect between cultures.

Organizations like ITAC have been instrumental in helping Indigenous tourism operators across Canada develop, market, and grow these experiences in a way that is community-led and culturally grounded. Their work has elevated Indigenous tourism into one of the most



compelling and important segments of Canada's visitor economy while advancing economic reconciliation in tangible ways.

ITAC's leadership has also been critical in supporting the growth and capacity of provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism organizations, including Indigenous Tourism Manitoba (ITM). Through national advocacy, partnership development, marketing support, and collaborative programming, ITAC has helped strengthen regional Indigenous tourism networks that directly support operators and communities on the ground.

We are deeply concerned by the current operational and funding challenges facing ITAC. At a time when global demand for authentic Indigenous tourism experiences continues to grow, Canada should be strengthening the national infrastructure that supports Indigenous tourism businesses and communities.

Indigenous tourism is culturally important and it is an increasingly important driver of regional economic development across Northern and rural Canada. The success of Indigenous tourism cannot depend solely on the passion and resilience of local operators. National coordination, advocacy, training, partnerships, and international marketing matter. ITAC has provided that leadership for years, and the loss of that capacity would have significant consequences not only for Indigenous tourism operators, but for Canada's tourism industry as a whole.

At Frontiers North Adventures, we believe reconciliation must include long-term investment in Indigenous economic development and Indigenous-led storytelling. Tourism has the power to build bridges between people and create pride within communities, but only when Indigenous voices remain at the centre of the experience. As part of that commitment, Frontiers North Adventures contributes to ITAC's Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund (ITDF), helping support the continued growth and sustainability of Indigenous tourism experiences across Canada.



We respectfully encourage the Government of Canada to work collaboratively with Indigenous tourism leaders to ensure the long-term sustainability and success of ITAC and the broader Indigenous tourism sector.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of Canada's tourism industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Gunter".

John Gunter, CEO
Frontiers North Adventures

[Frontiers North Adventures](#) acknowledges that we live and operate on Treaty 1, Treaty 2, and Treaty 5 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene and Inuit Peoples, and the Homeland of the Red River Métis Nation.

Cc:

The Honourable Mandy Gull-Masty, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Indigenous Services
mandy.gull-masty@sac-isc.gc.ca

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Industry
melanie.joly@ised-isde.gc.ca

Keith Henry
President & CEO, ITAC
keith@IndigenousTourism.ca

ASOCIACIÓN GREMIAL DE EMPRESAS DE TURISMO INDÍGENA DE TARAPACÁ – TITA A.G.

*Turismo Indígena • Desarrollo Territorial • Gobernanza Comunitaria
Chile*

Institutional Letter of Support

Dear Honorable Minister Rechie Valdez,

I am writing to express our firm support for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), an organization that today stands as an international reference in Indigenous tourism, territorial development, and the strengthening of Indigenous community economies.

From the experience we have been advancing in the Tarapacá Region of northern Chile, through processes of Indigenous territorial governance, associative collaboration, and community-based tourism development, we have been able to witness firsthand the transformative impact that ITAC has generated not only within Canada, but also in international spaces of cooperation among Indigenous peoples and territories.

ITAC has not only contributed to strengthening Indigenous tourism as an economic sector. It has also helped position a strategic vision grounded in Indigenous self-determination, cultural revitalization, territorial sustainability, and the active participation of communities in defining their own development models.

Through its leadership, ITAC has successfully built bridges between governments, communities, organizations, and tourism markets, generating capacities, training opportunities, quality standards, and collaborative networks that today serve as an example for multiple Indigenous tourism initiatives throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

In this context, we believe that any weakening of ITAC's operational capacity would have significant repercussions not only for Canada, but also for the international processes of collaboration and cooperation currently being strengthened among Indigenous organizations across the continent.

Today, more than ever, as concepts such as reconciliation, inclusion, sustainability, and culturally grounded development have become part of global priorities, it is essential to guarantee stable, strategic, and long-term support for the institutions leading these processes.

Strengthening Indigenous tourism represents a concrete investment in cultural resilience, territorial cohesion, community entrepreneurship, and economic reconciliation. It also represents an opportunity to consolidate more humane and sustainable development models that are aligned with the current challenges facing our territories and communities.

ASOCIACIÓN GREMIAL DE EMPRESAS DE TURISMO INDÍGENA DE TARAPACÁ – TITA A.G.

*Turismo Indígena • Desarrollo Territorial • Gobernanza Comunitaria
Chile*

For these reasons, we respectfully ask your ministry to consider and promote renewed and sustained support mechanisms for ITAC and for the Indigenous tourism ecosystem across Canada.

We sincerely appreciate your attention and leadership regarding this important matter.

Respectfully,



Wilfredo Bacian Delgado
President

Asociación Gremial de Empresas de Turismo Indígena de Tarapacá – TITA A.G.
Chile

Tarapacá - Chile, May 18, 2026