



INDIGENOUS
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

ASSOCIATION TOURISTIQUE
AUTOCHTONE
DU CANADA

Friday, June 19, 2026

Honourable Rechie Valdez
Secretary of State for Small Business and Tourism

Re: Meeting Request

Dear Minister Valdez,

I am writing on behalf of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) Board of Directors to follow up on my request, originally submitted in early May, for a meeting with you in your capacity as Minister for Tourism.

To date, we have not received a response, and I must express our concern regarding the lack of engagement with ITAC on matters of national importance to the Indigenous tourism sector.

ITAC is currently led by myself as Chair and Vice Chair Brenda Holder, both proud First Nations women and long-standing leaders within Canada's Indigenous tourism industry. We, along with our Board, represent Indigenous tourism operators and organizations across the country and remain deeply committed to advancing the sector for the benefit of Indigenous communities and Canada as a whole.

We recognize and respect that the outstanding ISED-funded Micro and Small Business Support Program contract issues require attention and resolution. However, there are broader and equally important concerns affecting the future of Indigenous tourism in Canada. Since 2023, ITAC has experienced the loss of core funding that supported national Indigenous tourism industry coordination, creating significant challenges for the continued growth, stability, and international competitiveness of the sector.

As Canada continues to be recognized as a global leader in Indigenous tourism, it is critical that we work collaboratively to address these challenges. Continued uncertainty and the absence of meaningful engagement are having tangible impacts on industry confidence, partnerships, and economic opportunities for Indigenous tourism businesses across the country.

We are also seeking clarification regarding recent meetings involving Indigenous tourism staff and administrative representatives rather than elected industry leadership. For example, ITAC Vice Chair Brenda Holder also serves as Chair of Indigenous Tourism Alberta. We understand meetings have occurred with executive staff, which raises concerns regarding appropriate governance and engagement protocols. We believe discussions regarding sector leadership, strategy, and policy should include and prioritize the elected leaders accountable for their respective organizations and memberships.



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Our intention is not to revisit differences, but rather to focus on solutions and a path forward. We remain committed to constructive dialogue and believe that direct engagement between government and Indigenous tourism leadership is essential.

We respectfully request a meeting at your earliest convenience and would appreciate an indication of when such a discussion can be scheduled.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response and the opportunity to work together to strengthen Indigenous tourism in Canada.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Yadultin Jensen - Chair
Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)