



May 19, 2026

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

Dear Minister Valdez,

I am writing on behalf of Borealis Beading, a Métis-owned cultural tourism business in Manitoba, to express my deep concern regarding the significant reduction and planned elimination of federal funding for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC).

As a small sole proprietor business rooted in sharing Métis culture through beadwork, storytelling, cultural workshops, and tourism experiences, I can say with certainty that organizations like mine would not have had the same opportunities for growth, visibility, and success without the support and leadership of ITAC.

For many small Indigenous tourism operators, especially those in rural and underserved communities, ITAC has been far more than a tourism organization. It has been a mentor, advocate, connector, educator, and champion for Indigenous entrepreneurs across Canada. ITAC created opportunities for businesses like mine to dream bigger, reach new audiences, build partnerships, and achieve goals we did not think possible before ITAC was established.

Indigenous tourism is not simply about travel. It is about preserving and sharing culture, strengthening identity, creating economic opportunities, revitalizing language and traditions, and building meaningful understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Through authentic experiences, Indigenous tourism contributes directly to reconciliation while supporting local economies and community wellbeing.

The proposed elimination of funding threatens not only the stability of ITAC, but also the future of countless Indigenous-owned tourism businesses that rely on the organization for marketing support, training, industry development, international representation, and national advocacy. Many small operators do not have the capacity or resources to replace the vital support systems ITAC provides.





At a time when Canada continues to advance reconciliation commitments and support Indigenous economic development, reducing investment in Indigenous tourism sends a discouraging message to the entrepreneurs and communities who have worked tirelessly to build this sector. Supporting Indigenous-led tourism aligns directly with economic reconciliation and the Calls to Action that encourage the preservation, celebration, and sharing of Indigenous cultures and histories.

I respectfully urge the federal government to restore and maintain stable, long-term funding for ITAC. Indigenous tourism has proven its value not only economically, but socially and culturally across Canada. Continued investment in Indigenous tourism is an investment in community resilience, cultural sustainability, and a stronger future for Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope your office will recognize the critical importance of ITAC and the lasting impact it continues to have on Indigenous tourism businesses like Borealis Beading and many others across the country.

Sincerely,

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