



To the Honorable Reichi Valdez, federal secretary of state for tourism and small business

I am writing this letter in response to the decision to cut all funding for Indigenous Tourism and economic development.

I would like to stress the adverse impact this has on not only our industry, but the organization that gave us a voice, ITAC. We have been a tight community of tour operators for many years now and question the lack of financial support offered to this vital sector, especially given that Financial benefits trickle down to all areas of our economy and create employment for other indigenous and non indigenous citizens.

Our industry is a major economic driver contributing 3.7 billion to the economy and creating over 30,000 jobs across the nation. Indigenous tourism in Canada is a leader in the global market with unique cultural experiences that are sought after by 1 in 3 visitors. The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada created this momentum and has been a powerful voice for us operators, to not continue to fund this organization is to take away our voice.

To cripple our industry makes no sense to the indigenous operators given that it is a sustainable and viable industry, especially since federal support of indigenous tourism was listed as a priority. Before ITAC, Indigenous tour operators faced many barriers and challenges, without ITAC, you leave our sector vulnerable and unprotected.

I strongly urge you to reconsider your priorities for funding and recognize that indigenous tourism is an industry worth saving

With Respect
Tracey Klett