



Whitecap Dakota Nation

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May 15, 2026

Via Email: rechie.valdez@parl.gc.ca

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

Dear Minister Valdez,

Re: Urgent Federal Action Required to Support Indigenous Tourism and ITAC

On behalf of Whitecap Dakota Nation, I am writing to express our strong and urgent support for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and to call for the immediate reinstatement of core federal funding for Indigenous tourism.

Indigenous tourism is not a niche sector, it is central to economic reconciliation and to Canada's commitment to telling a complete and inclusive story. At Whitecap Dakota Nation, located minutes from Saskatoon, we have strategically positioned ourselves as a destination hub that welcomes visitors from across Canada and internationally. Through investments in Dakota Dunes Resort, hospitality services, and cultural tourism experiences, we are creating sustainable employment opportunities for our members while sharing Dakota language, history, and culture in an authentic and respectful way.

We are also actively advancing future tourism developments, including enhanced cultural programming and new visitor experiences that will further strengthen our role in Saskatchewan's tourism economy. These investments rely on a stable and coordinated national Indigenous tourism strategy, one that ITAC has led with proven success.

The complete elimination of ITAC's core federal funding places all this progress at risk. Without immediate federal action, Indigenous tourism operators across the country, including those in rural and remote communities, will face uncertainty, stalled growth, and, in some cases, closure. This is not only an economic setback, it is a direct contradiction to Canada's commitments to reconciliation, Indigenous entrepreneurship, and inclusive economic development.

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ITAC has demonstrated national leadership by building capacity, connecting partners, and elevating Indigenous tourism on the global stage. The absence of stable funding undermines years of progress and weakens Canada's competitive position in a growing international market.

We believe this moment requires decisive leadership. Whitecap Dakota Nation stands alongside Indigenous tourism operators, partners, and communities across Canada in calling for:

- Immediate reinstatement of ITAC's core federal funding
- Long-term, sustainable investment in Indigenous tourism development
- Formal recognition of Indigenous tourism as a priority sector within Canada's tourism strategy

The current situation requires urgent attention. Continued inaction risks undoing years of collaborative work and limits the economic potential of Indigenous communities that are ready and willing to lead.

We respectfully urge your office to act without delay to ensure the stability, growth, and long-term success of Indigenous tourism in Canada.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We would welcome the opportunity to engage further.

Sincerely,

Chief Darcy Bear
Whitecap Dakota Nation