



May 27, 2026

The Honourable Rechie Valdez
Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)
Government of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Email: rechie.valdez@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Valdez,

On behalf of the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association (YFNCT), we are writing to express our strong support for continued and sustained federal investment in Indigenous tourism and the broader network of provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism organizations across the country.

The growth trend of Indigenous tourism in Canada is one of the fastest-growing tourism sectors in Canada. Since 2021, there has been between 40% and 45% in the number of Indigenous businesses in the tourism sector, which relates to 34,700 direct jobs, and an economic contribution to Canada's GDP of \$1.6 billion.

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) provides its members with the tools and resources that results in Indigenous businesses starting, growing, and competing globally while maintaining cultural authenticity.

In the Yukon, Indigenous tourism creates meaningful opportunities for travellers to connect with the land, stories, traditions, and living cultures of Yukon First Nations while supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs, cultural revitalization, and community economic development. Organizations like YFNCT play an essential role in supporting Indigenous tourism operators through marketing, training, partnership development, and industry advocacy.

Without dedicated federal investment and strong national leadership through organizations like ITAC, Indigenous tourism risks being overlooked within the broader tourism industry. The momentum of product development will be stifled, creating a lasting negative impact on the tourism industry and visitor experiences. Indigenous-led experiences require culturally informed support and visibility to ensure they are not overshadowed by larger sectors that already receive significant exposure and resources.

Continued investment in Indigenous tourism is an investment in reconciliation, economic resilience, and the preservation and sharing of Indigenous cultures. Sustained support for ITAC and regional Indigenous tourism organizations is essential to ensuring Indigenous voices remain at the forefront of how these experiences are developed and shared across Canada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ABA' with a flourish at the end.

Amber Berard-Althouse
Board President
On behalf of the Board of Directors
Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association