



June 2, 2026

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

Re: Support for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)

Dear Secretary Valdez,

On behalf of Firecircle, I am writing to express our strong support for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and the critical role it continues to play in advancing Indigenous entrepreneurship, economic development, and tourism across Canada.

For more than 15 years, my companies, Pure North Canada, and more recently, Firecircle, have worked alongside Indigenous entrepreneurs, communities, and organizations to support business development, planning, training, and long-term economic sustainability. Throughout that work, we have witnessed firsthand the positive impact ITAC has had on Indigenous tourism operators from coast to coast to coast.

ITAC has done far more than market tourism experiences. The provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism organizations provide important, excellent guidance, training and marketing at the local level; ITAC has provided the *national* infrastructure for a pan-Canadian ecosystem of Indigenous-owned businesses by creating opportunities for entrepreneurs to access training, mentorship, partnerships, market development, accreditation, and national visibility.

It pains us greatly to see the discord between some of the provincial Indigenous tourism organizations and ITAC. While these organizations have their respective reasons for discord with each other, and we respect these points of view from both sides, there remains a need for a national advocacy and marketing organization. Canada needs one unifying voice for Indigenous tourism, much like Destination Canada provides to the world.

We are deeply concerned by the challenges ITAC is currently facing and the implications this may have for Indigenous tourism operators, communities, and entrepreneurs across the country. The success of Indigenous tourism cannot rest solely on the resilience of individual business owners and the provincial and territorial tourism organizations. National leadership, sector coordination,

and ongoing investment remain essential to ensuring continued growth and long-term sustainability.

Canada has become internationally recognized as a leader in Indigenous tourism development. Much of that success can be directly attributed to the vision, partnerships, and leadership cultivated by ITAC over the past decade. Protecting and strengthening that foundation is an investment not only in tourism, but in Indigenous entrepreneurship, economic reconciliation, and community prosperity.

We respectfully encourage the Government of Canada to continue supporting Indigenous tourism through stable and sustainable investment in the national organizations that make this success possible.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to supporting Indigenous economic development across Canada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Allen', written in a cursive style.

Deneen Allen
CEO, Firecircle
m. 416.659.6915

Firecircle

