



**UNIQUE
ADVENTURES
EXCURSIONS
BY DOGSLED**

6-24-26

Dear Honorable Rechie Valdez

I am writing to express my concern regarding the lack of funding support being directed toward the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada and the impacts this has on Indigenous tourism operators like myself.

I own and operate Unique Adventures, a small Indigenous tourism business that provides dog sled excursions and experiences rooted in culture, connection to the land, and education. My business is more than simply offering an activity to visitors; it is an opportunity to share Indigenous culture, create meaningful experiences, and contribute to local economic growth while supporting reconciliation through tourism.

For small businesses like mine, organizations such as the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada provide critical support through advocacy, marketing, training opportunities, industry development, networking, and resources that many small operators cannot access on their own. When funding is reduced or eliminated, the effects reach far beyond one organization — it directly affects entrepreneurs and families working hard to build sustainable businesses.

Running a small tourism business already comes with significant challenges and rising costs. In my case, operating dog sled excursions includes animal care, equipment, insurance, transportation, maintenance, staffing, marketing, and ensuring guests have meaningful and safe experiences. Like many Indigenous entrepreneurs, I continue to

invest in growing and improving my business while trying to create opportunities not only for myself, but for my community and future generations.

Without proper investment in Indigenous tourism support systems, many small operators may struggle to grow, innovate, or even sustain their businesses. This not only impacts individual entrepreneurs, but risks slowing the momentum that Indigenous tourism has built across Canada.

On a strictly personal note, my business is very new. I have been spending, investing and pushing to reach the criteria for the “Original Original” accreditation. Spending countless hours, and funds to build for my future as well as the tourism industry in St.Malo Mb where I grew up. I am still so very new. I need the support. I want nothing more than to learn and grow in my culture through tourism. The few events I have attended in relation have helped me gain knowledge, confidence, and friends that are dealing or have dealt with similar issues as myself. This is invaluable to me. I need tourism family.. I need these “funded” events. I need the contacts.

I appreciate your time and consideration and hope that Indigenous tourism organizations and operators will continue to receive the support needed to grow and succeed.

Sincerely,

Shanna Bastiaanssen of

Unique Adventures- excursions by dogsled