

February 24, 2022

RE: PROPOSAL FOR TOURISM, HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE SECTOR TRAINING BY CETABC

To Whom It May Concern:

The Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC) is a province-wide advocacy organization that represents the more than 19,000 businesses and 350,000 people working in BC's tourism and hospitality sector. As you know, tourism is an integral part of BC's character and economy. It is interwoven throughout the fabric of the province, supporting families and anchoring the culture of communities.

In 2019 (pre-pandemic), tourism contributed over \$22.3 billion in revenue and \$1.7 billion in provincial taxes to BC's economy. Those numbers were set to grow further prior to the devastating impact of COVID-19. As a consequence of the pandemic, many businesses have either folded or significantly reduced operations. Furthermore, most operators have lost both skilled and unskilled employees, which will make it extremely difficult to build toward full capacity as the industry begins to recover.

Because of our severe workforce challenges, the tourism and hospitality industry must consider all options to attract and retain employees, including a timely and effective program to train workers with the necessary skills and certifications to enter or re-enter this vital sector.

To that end, TIABC is excited by and fully supportive of the joint proposal for tourism, hospitality and service sector training by member institutions of the Continuing Education and Training Association of British Columbia (CETABC).

In reviewing the contents of the proposed program, we are very much in favour of the initiative being group orientated and offered as in-person classes. While all participants will need to successfully complete the learning outcomes as defined by the program, including additional safety and technical certifications, we are especially keen on the employment assistance module which will provide an opportunity for participants to meet employers through tours, site visits, and one-on-one meetings.

What's more, in addition to the practical knowledge of tourism and hospitality, participants will be provided with health and wellness skills, as well as strategies to search for future work opportunities. TIABC believes this project to be timely and beneficial for the following reasons:

- Builds participants' labour market skills and employability in the restaurant, hotel, and retail sales/service sectors;
- Provides and improves participants' life skills and leadership tools necessary to succeed in a career in tourism and hospitality;
- Develops participants' skills necessary to succeed in a multicultural, diverse, and inclusive work setting; and
- Increases participants' understanding of the restaurant, hotel, retail sales/service industry and the opportunities it can provide them.

Once the program is affirmed, TIABC is committed to promoting the initiative to our province-wide members and stakeholders, and potentially dedicate resources or expertise to facilitate this exciting opportunity. More specifically, we will help recruit program graduates if need be, or facilitate their employment across regions based on skills, aptitudes, and flexibility. We are convinced that this project will benefit the tourism and hospitality sector across the province and that CETABC has the leadership and capacity required to guide this important initiative forward.

We strongly encourage you to approve funding for this project so that it can launch soon for the benefit of the entire BC visitor economy. If you have any questions regarding TIABC's support, please reach out at your earliest convenience.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Walt Judas', is positioned below the text 'Best Regards,'.

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