

Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance



Alliance canadienne du tourisme sportif

April 3, 2020

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault
Minister of Heritage
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Guilbeault:

Please accept this correspondence on behalf of the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance (CSTA) which represents over 500 members, including 130 destinations, 200 national and provincial sport organizations and a variety of suppliers of goods and services to the industry that are actively involved in hosting and supporting sport events as an economic driver in their communities across Canada.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the sport tourism industry was the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry over the past 10 years with over \$6.8 billion in annual spending and incremental growth year over year. The industry provides significant economic benefits to host communities in addition to the many social, community engagement and sport development benefits that occur as a result of hosting sport events.

We appreciate the steps already taken by the federal government to mitigate impacts in a responsible manner and assist Canadian citizens as well as businesses, including the sport tourism industry, in the face of an unprecedented and quickly-evolving situation.

While we recognize that this situation is fluid and growing at a breakneck pace, the travel economy is one of the first and most severely impacted sectors of not only the Canadian economy but also the global economy in the immediate term. Sport tourism can also be part of the solution in getting sport facilities, hotels and restaurants open and operational again.

We have recently conducted a survey of our members. The responses indicate that impacts are steep, precipitous and worsening with each passing day as sport event cancellations grow at an accelerated rate across the country.

Over 2,000 sport events and leagues have already been cancelled or postponed indefinitely, including:

- ISU World Figure Skating Championships (Montreal)
- World Women's Curling Championship (Prince George)
- IIHF Women's World Hockey Championship (Halifax)
- Arctic Winter Games (Whitehorse)
- North American Indigenous Games (Halifax)
- Ottawa Race Weekend
- Vancouver Marathon
- Memorial Cup (Kelowna)

- Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Swimming Trials (Toronto)
- World Mixed Doubles and World Senior Curling Championships (Kelowna)
- FIS Cross-Country Skiing World Cup (Quebec City)
- Grand Prix Long Track Speedskating (Calgary)
- Hundreds of provincial and national championships.

Focus on Recovery

Eventually, the current unprecedented crisis will subside, and Canada will need to put measures in place to ensure the economy can quickly rebound and compete on the global stage. Sport tourism will play a critical role in the recovery strategies at the community level by providing the opportunity for people to contribute to the travel economy by traveling, staying in hotels, eating in restaurants and supporting other retail businesses locally. As such, we are requesting the following:

Sport Hosting Program

- Increase the funding envelope for the Sport Canada Hosting Program for International Sport Events from \$10 million/year to \$40 million/year for the next two years
- Revise the eligibility criteria to include national championships as well as international sport events
- Revise the funding formula for eligible events to a 75/25 federal/provincial split vs the 1/3; 1/3; 1/3 formula that currently exists
- Open the program to non-Olympic sports.

The proportionate number FTE would be added/redeployed within the public service to handle the expected increase in applications.

Temporary Adjustment of Charitable Donation Criteria

One of the key perceived barriers to a return to normal activities is the potential for corporations to reduce or eliminate sponsorship of sport events due to the economic downturn. Corporate sponsorship represents a significant revenue stream for sport event organizers without which many events would be unable to operate. As such, to encourage corporations to continue to invest in sport events, we propose the following:

- Engage with Minister Morneau at Finance to consider facilitating and expanding what is deemed to be a charitable contribution to allow for the inclusion of all corporate sponsorship of Canadian amateur sport properties (NSO, PSO, youth sport, Canadian championships, MSO, etc.) and allow these properties to issue tax receipts to sponsors in return for their sponsorship investment.

Community Event Hosting Fund

- Invest \$20 million over two years into a new event-related fund that will deliver economic, cultural and social benefits for communities across Canada. This program will serve to instill public confidence in gatherings, support local industry and drive new economic activity.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your staff to make a presentation illustrating how Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance can work with the Government of Canada to develop a strategy for sport events as a recovery initiative at the community level.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Traer". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal stroke.

Rick Traer, CEO

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