

August 6, 2026

The Honourable Rechie Valdez, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Women & Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business & Tourism)
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

I am writing on behalf of the Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA), which represents more than 700 hotels across Alberta, to express our concern for ensuring that Destination Canada continues to be led by an individual with the experience, qualifications, and strategic leadership necessary to advance one of Canada's most important economic sectors.

Tourism is a major economic driver, a significant source of employment, and an essential contributor to the prosperity of communities across Canada. The industry generates billions of dollars in economic activity, supports hundreds of thousands of jobs, and creates opportunities for businesses of every size, from rural and remote communities to world class resorts to Canada's largest urban centres. As governments across the country focus on economic growth, productivity, and diversification, tourism has proven itself to be an industry capable of delivering on all three.

The tourism and hospitality sector has worked diligently to ensure tourism is recognized as a critical pillar of Canada's economy. Through sustained advocacy, collaboration, and partnership, our industry has demonstrated the role it can play in creating jobs, attracting investment, supporting exports, and contributing to Canada's long-term economic resilience. Maintaining that momentum requires strong national leadership and an understanding of the breadth and depth of the industry.

Destination Canada plays a pivotal role in that success. As Canada's national destination marketing organization, it is responsible for positioning Canada as a premier global destination, attracting international visitors, business events, and investment, while strengthening the competitiveness of our tourism sector in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. The leadership of Destination Canada is therefore of national importance. Its Chief Executive Officer must possess not only exceptional executive leadership skills but also a deep understanding of the tourism industry, its opportunities,

and its challenges. The decisions made by Destination Canada influence businesses, employees, and communities from coast to coast to coast.

For this reason, the Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association believes it is essential that the selection of Destination Canada's next leader be guided by a transparent, merit-based process that prioritizes demonstrated leadership, relevant experience, and a proven ability to advance Canada's tourism sector. The industry deserves a leader with the qualifications and expertise necessary to build on the significant progress that has been made and to ensure Canada remains competitive on the world stage.

This perspective is not about any individual or political affiliation. Rather, it reflects the importance of appointing the strongest possible candidate to lead an organization that is integral to Canada's economic growth and international reputation. Tourism has earned its place as a priority economic sector, and Destination Canada deserves leadership that reflects the significance of its mandate.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued engagement with Canada's tourism industry. We look forward to working with the Government of Canada to continue growing an industry that creates jobs, strengthens local economies, and showcases the very best of Canada to the world.

Sincerely,

Tracy Douglas, CAE
President & CEO
Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association

cc Hon. Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada
 Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade,
 Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade and One Canadian Economy
 Hon. Melanie Joly, Minister of Industry
 Sony Perron, Deputy Minister of Industry
 Jenifer Pilon, Director General, Tourism, ISED
 Derek Lipman, Director of Appointments, Prime Minister's Office
 Beth McMahon, President & CEO, Hotels Canada
 Darren Reeder, Tourism Industry Association of Alberta