Recommendations

Please keep in mind that this is one of three potential significant events in 2020 that will impact the tourism industry in Ontario. Many are already feeling the pinch from school labour actions (cancelled school trips) and many are gearing up for the impending flood season (and are still reeling from last year’s flood season).

In addition to these ideas, we also want to acknowledge and support the ideas and recommendations coming forward from other organizations such as the Canadian Airport Council, Canadian Live Music Association, and the Hotel Association of Canada.

Immediate action is required. The short-term suggestions need to be implemented immediately. The mid and long-term suggestions need to be in progress so that when it’s time, we are ready to go.

Short Term
1. EI – workers that are kept on during this crisis but may have to access EI later will have much fewer hours to base their wages on – use last 20 weeks of 2019 to access wages
2. EI – increase payments from 55% to 80%
3. EI – any workers that have been on seasonal layoffs will need an extension to their benefits
4. Liquidity – access to cash flow for ongoing fixed payments are needed
5. Insurance – to date, all government announcements that affect businesses have been suggestions – this is impacting the ability to invoke “force majeure” clauses in cancellation insurance
6. Debt payment deferral - much like Italy, it is suggested that a freeze on mortgage payments (or at least interest payments) be enacted to relieve pressure from reduced cash flow.
7. Taxes - Put a pause on payroll taxes, property taxes, and HST payments which are all due in the next few weeks
8. Taxes - Extension of income tax deadline
9. Taxes – suspend any interest on taxes owed from previous years
10. Taxes – implement a substantial wage/tax credit for the lowest earners
11. Keep borders open for cargo, transportation of goods to keep supply chains open

Please keep in mind that many businesses support the tourism sector in the supply chain. i.e. food suppliers, show services and audio-visual companies, product suppliers, etc.

These businesses need to be included in all of these recommendations.

Mid Term
1. MAT funding collected by cities all being allocated to tourism instead of 50% (Provincial)
2. RTO partner funding amount increased (doubled) to encourage product development (Provincial)
3. Once health officials indicate life can resume as normal encourage domestic travel and provide incentives
4. Open the provincial parks early- to encourage healthy activities and social distancing. Encourage people to leave the metropolitan areas and take a walk in the country. Get sun, fresh air and maybe spend some money in the process. Waive entrance fees until the summer.

5. Assist tourism businesses in building out and/or enhancing their digital presence. Build competence and capability to allow our businesses/sector to re-emerge with first-class digital marketing platforms.

6. Assisting tourism businesses in creating great content. In combination with the point above, let help businesses (and their DMO's) build great digital assets.

**Long Term**

1. Funding for the development and enhancement of great tourism products. These could be both new experiences and existing ones.

2. Reopen the welcome centres/travel information centres.

3. Capital spending stimulus- if there is a decline in tourism activities, it would be better to have the workers completing other projects around the properties. Whether it is landscaping, gardens, small structures, or something else, it is good to keep people busy.

4. Credits and incentives for tourism businesses to continue or start capital enhancements. Let's encourage businesses to continue to renovate, build capacity and improve operations.