



People. Product. Promotion.

Tourism Industry Messaging for the 2018 Provincial Election

Tourism matters in Ontario. Our industry represents \$32.3B billion in annual receipts, \$25.3 billion in visitor spending, 186,000 businesses and 389,000 jobs. More than 140 million people visit Ontario every year, contributing almost \$5 billion annually in tax revenues for the provincial government. The tourism sector in Ontario accounts for 1 in every 20 jobs, and is Canada's largest service export. The economic contribution of tourism is larger than agriculture, forestry and mining combined.

The Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) is recognized as the voice of tourism in Ontario, facilitating conversation between stakeholders and government to position the sector for growth and prosperity. Below are TIAO's recommendations for how the next Government of Ontario can support the tourism industry in increasing its economic contributions for the province. These recommendations are focused around three important themes: **People, Product and Promotion.**

People: The core of the tourism business centres on providing outstanding service and experiences to visitors, whether they come from near or far. To do this well, the tourism industry is focused on developing a qualified and skilled labour force. This means changing the perception that tourism is only a part-time, or seasonal job. It means encouraging young people—including Indigenous youth, new Canadians, and people transitioning between jobs—to consider a career in the tourism industry. It means filling high school, college and university tourism programs with Ontarians who want a career in our industry, creating outstanding experiences for visitors.

Product: Visitors want authentic experiences. Both the tourism industry and Ontario's Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport acknowledge the need to develop authentic, market-ready products and experiences that put visitors first. To support this, investment in infrastructure such as roadways, transportation and communication are vital, in addition to healthy businesses.

Promotion: When making travel plans, tourists will either choose where they want to go, or what they want to do. Marketing strategically requires collaboration with appropriate partners, alignment with regional and national strategies, and long-term commitments. Ontario occupies a unique position within Canada as a gateway to the rest of the country—a position that needs to be harnessed.

Quotes:

"In 2011, Ontario's Tourism Investment Strategy and Implementation Plan set a goal to double tourism receipts by the year 2020, reaching a total of \$44 billion. The tourism industry is not keeping pace with this goal. TIAO welcomes any opportunity to work with the next Government of Ontario to position the province's tourism sector for the growth and success needed to reach our targets."

Beth Potter, President & CEO, Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO)

"Canada welcomed a record-breaking 20.8 million international visitors in 2017, 2.8 million of whom travelled to Ontario from overseas—a 7.9 per cent increase compared to the previous year, according to Statistics Canada. Our province is a top destination for travellers around the globe, and our industry needs to be ready to greet them. TIAO's policy recommendations for the next Government of Ontario provide a clear path to ensure that the tourism sector has the tools and resources it needs to succeed."

Lorrie McKee, Director, Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations, Greater Toronto Airports Authority; Board Chair, Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO)

Find out more at www.tiaontario.ca/cpages/2018provincialelection

THE ASKS

PEOPLE

Skills Development & Labour Gap

Asks:

- Utilizing the 10-year Jobs and Prosperity Fund, maintain the practice of partnering with private sector organizations to attract anchor investments for tourism; this could be done through a dedicated stream for tourism and hospitality
- Redesign Employment Ontario services for both job-seekers and employers to create a more user-friendly online experience, and implement an outcomes-based funding model that rewards partners and service providers based on successful job placements
- Make it easier for tourism businesses to access employment-related funding programs

Promoting Careers in Tourism

Asks:

- Implement service excellence training as a mandatory part of the Grade 10 Career Credit
- Include tourism in the Career Kick-Start Strategy
- Maintain support of TIAO's Careers in Tourism Awareness Campaign, aimed at raising the profile of Ontario's tourism industry for future employees
- Work with employers and educators to confirm that available training programs correspond with tourism labour market supply and demand, including the distinct needs of rural areas and urban centres.
 - A. At the high school and community levels, actively engage business in skills training development to ensure young people are educated in response to business needs
 - B. At the college and university levels, partner with the business community to provide insight for curriculum development, skills competitions and workplace learning opportunities

Employment Standards and Labour Relations

Asks:

- Do not alter minimum wage differentials for students under 18
- Slow down the increase to \$15 per hour for minimum wage by six months to a year

International Trade & Immigration

Asks:

- Align immigration priorities with local employment issues—encourage international students to explore education options outside of the GTHA
- Ensure affordable housing solutions exist for foreign tourism employees working in Ontario, particularly in rural and northern regions

PRODUCT

Transportation

Asks:

- Implement two-way, daily GO train or bus services from the GTA and Toronto Pearson Airport to surrounding municipalities
- Expand off-peak and weekend GO service in rural areas i.e. year-round trips to Niagara Falls and off-peak weekday service to Barrie
- Support development of a "Union West" transportation hub at Toronto Pearson International Airport
- Support the Southern Ontario Airport Network to mitigate future aviation demand
- Support development of high-speed rail in Ontario
- Continue development of transportation infrastructure in rural and northern Ontario, including updates to rest stops; identifying areas for additional passing lanes and/or four-laning; improved signage and wayfinding; reviewing potential security upgrades for new international airline services to remote locations; and providing support for Great Lakes Tourism
- Remove surcharge for aviation fuel on all international flights to Ontario

Tourism Investment Strategy

Asks:

- Establish analysis of the cost-of-doing-business (CODB) in Ontario to identify and track impacts of newly implemented policies or proposed changes on the business community and its regulatory expenses

Sharing Economy

Asks:

- Review rules and regulations that would level the playing field for traditional accommodation providers
- Require Airbnb and similar home-sharing platforms to collect VAT on service fees

Infrastructure

Asks:

- Support development of a broadband investment strategy for Ontario, and adopt a benchmarking system for internet speeds to ensure investment and business needs for connectivity are in alignment
- Consider moving forward the implementation dates for the Southwest Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT)
- Ensure changes to energy costs under Ontario's Long-Term Energy Plan are affordable, predictable and transparent; this will allow for tourism businesses to achieve budget security during financial planning cycles
- Commit to implementing the above recommendations by 2020

PROMOTION

Long-Term Sustainable Funding

Asks:

- Provide 3-year rolling funding for Destination Ontario
- Restore annual funding of \$40 million for Ontario's Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs), and implement rolling 3-year funding processes, tied to the same provincial accelerator used for Municipal Accommodation Tax—a 10-year average of the annual growth rate of Ontario tourism receipts
- Maintain investment in programs such as Celebrate Ontario and the Tourism Development Fund, in addition to the province's tourism agencies and attractions; grow investment levels each year as tourism receipts grow
- Commit to funding further development of Indigenous tourism in the province by providing \$2 million in annual funding support for Indigenous Tourism Ontario