

Beyond Borders Tourism Coalition
Joint Statement from the *Beyond Borders Tourism Coalition*
on The Future of Travel in North America:

(April 15, 2025) As a coalition of North American tourism associations committed to open borders, accessibility and safety, we recognize the tourism industry's pivotal role in fostering vital economic stability & growth, cultural exchange, and environmental stewardship. As we move into 2025, the industry faces a dynamic landscape of challenges and opportunities that call for innovative solutions and unified action.

Current government trade and border crossing policies are creating an environment of instability in the travel sector, which is creating many hurdles. These challenges threaten not only the financial health of countless businesses but also the livelihoods of millions of workers who rely on a thriving tourism industry. Indigenous communities, which are increasingly benefiting from a growing demand for authentic cultural experiences, also face heightened risks as economic pressures mount.

Nowhere is this pressure greater than between Canada and the United States. Each country counts the other as its most significant trading and travel partner – with the recent declines impacting businesses and communities on both sides of the border.

This is especially true throughout Indigenous communities who remain connected through kinship and culture regardless of borders. The importance of sharing culture and place remains strong through Indigenous lands and people, who have also created an important Indigenous cultural tourism economy which is now facing negative impacts.

Despite these US and Canadian tourism industry challenges we have formed a coalition committed to work together as the *Beyond Borders Tourism Coalition* to ensure we support tourism opportunities between our great countries. We know that by committing to work together we bring our countries closer together. The elimination of barriers and easing of cross-border tourism is critical for revitalizing global tourism economies. Air and ground transportation facilitates integration into the global economy and generates trade, promotes tourism, and creates employment opportunities. Policies that simplify visa processes and enhance cross-border collaboration can foster economic growth while encouraging cultural exchange and understanding, helping dispel damaging stereotypes.

The travel industry's interconnected nature demands unified voices and actions to tackle shared challenges arising from the current unprecedented situation. Speaking with one voice amplifies our influence, ensuring we are not ignored. Tourism has the power to bridge borders, drive economic growth, link people together and champion environmental stewardship. By embracing

collaboration and innovation, we must build a resilient future that benefits travelers and global communities. As a coalition of Canadian and US based associations, we stand together and united at a time when our economies and purchasing power are in turmoil.

Facts and Figures

Recent reports from The Washington Post and Forbes highlight a decline in international travelers. The most recent data from Stats Canada shows this past February, there was a 13.1% decline of Canadians flying back from the US compared to the same month in 2024. According to projections, this trend could lead to significant economic repercussions. For the US alone, foreign tourist spending is expected to fall by 11%, representing an \$18 billion loss in 2025. The decline in international tourism, coupled with a potential decrease in domestic travel, could result in a staggering \$64 billion loss for the U.S. travel sector by the end of 2025. For April, air travelers hold fewer than 300,000 advanced bookings between Canada and the U.S., OAG found, down more than 75% year-over-year. For each month from May through September, advanced bookings are down between 71.4% and 72.2%.

Canada is also facing reductions in US visitors for the 2025 year. Visitors from the US spend an estimated \$13 billion in Canada providing important sustainability for jobs and thousands of tourism operators throughout Canada. Issues such as increased tariffs, thickening of the border, reduction of air capacity, and growing US negative sentiment to Canada may result in modest losses to the Canadian tourism industry in the short and potentially major losses in the long term.

Call to Action

We will leverage our collective resources to raise awareness among our members, policymakers and the public about the important work that needs to be done. Please share this message widely, including on social media, with your elected officials, partners and those in the hospitality sector, colleagues, customers, travelers. Together, we can ensure that our industry empowers safe, accessible, and enriching travel experiences for generations to come.

Coalition Membership

Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA)
American Bus Association (ABA)
Canadian Association of Tour Operators (CATO)
Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)
International Inbound Travel Association (IITA)
National Tour Association (NTA)
Student & Youth Travel Association (SYTA)
United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA)

For more information, please contact info@cato.ca.