



Canadian Association of Tour Operators

Honourable Randy Boissonnault
Minister of Tourism & Associate Minister of Finance
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6

RE: CANADA POISED TO LOSE A THIRD SUMMER

Dear Honourable Randy Boissonnault,

I write to you on behalf of the Canadian Association of Tour Operators. CATO represents tour operators across Canada including many of the biggest brands and employers. Our members offer tour programs and travel packages originating from Canada to international destinations as well as inbound to Canada, intra-Canada and trans-border.

This past year CATO commissioned an economic impact study of its members and engaged the services of BDO to conduct it. In June the ***Economic Impact Assessment*** was published. One of the most striking travel indicators contained in the report was the average advance purchase time of 5.7 months prior to travel. That timeline was consistent with advance purchase timelines prior to the pandemic and has remained unchanged.

What this means, is that for Canada to have a meaningful tourism recovery this summer or perhaps even this year, we need to eliminate all ineffectual travel barriers not driven by science. We need to acknowledge that air, rail, coach and essentially all other modes of travel are exclusive to fully vaccinated travellers. Furthermore, we need to acknowledge the test positive rate of arriving travellers has remained close to 1% consistently, compared to community rates of nearly 20X that at the height of testing. We need to signal to the world that Canada is OPEN FOR BUSINESS.

The two biggest barriers for international travellers considering a trip to Canada or abroad, or otherwise, considering cancelling their trip, is Canada's required pre-departure PCR test and arrival PCR test and quarantine plan. These are the #1 and #2 deterrents to any future travel demand or recovery and they are not supported by science or even the government's own advisory council.

In a news release on January 20th 2022, following the Canadian Council of Tourism Ministers meeting, it was stated "Canada has proven itself to be a destination where people can safely travel". Furthermore, it stated the ministers and associated federal-provincial-territorial governments commitment to "restoring travellers' confidence in Canada" and noting "visitor spending is a key economic contributor for communities from coast to coast to coast".

While there is no doubt lots to plan for and be done to build back the tourism industry better than before, we must also eliminate any unproven barriers. Recently, Australia rescinded the need for visitors



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to obtain a PCR test within 72 hours of departure and replaced with a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) within 24 hours. Similarly, the UK announced it's dropping all testing requirements for fully vaccinated travellers. Immediately following this announcement, Boris Johnson proclaimed "this country is open for business, open for travellers".

Canada must open for business as well by eliminating all testing for fully vaccinated travellers or face the consequences of a horribly stunted recovery in 2022, if any at all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett Walker". The signature is stylized with loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brett Walker, CATO Chair

33 Kern Road, Toronto, Ontario M3B 1S9

cc Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Caroline Proulx, Minister of Tourism of Quebec