



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Honourable Melanie Mark, MLA
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport
Room 133 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

April 7, 2021

Dear Minister Mark,

As your government was made aware on March 5, 2021, legislation has been introduced in the United States Congress that could have devastating impacts on B.C.'s cruise ship and tourism industry for years to come. The *Alaska Tourism Recovery Act* would allow cruise ships to bypass B.C. ports like Victoria, Vancouver, and Prince Rupert on their way to and from Alaska. There is no indication that, if passed, this legislation won't become a permanent measure in U.S. law and cruise ship policy.

The United States is taking direct action to protect and preserve its tourism industry — at our province's expense — and concerningly, your government appears to have taken little action on the matter. Cruise ship tourism is responsible for \$2.7 billion in annual revenue in British Columbia, as well as 20,000 direct and indirect jobs. Every cruise ship that visits Vancouver brings \$3 million in direct activity to the local economy.

If your government continues to remain silent on the issue, we risk permanently losing hundreds of millions of dollars in cruise ship tourism revenue, plus the hundreds of B.C. businesses who rely on cruise ship traffic. Victoria alone lost an estimated \$130 million in tourism revenue in the 2020 cruise season.

In the interest of the thousands of B.C. businesses and workers who depend on the future of a healthy and robust cruise ship industry, we request your office promptly respond to the following inquiries:



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- What communication has your government had with the federal government of Canada and the Alaska Congressional Delegation to ensure legislation and policy enacted in the United States will not have permanent detrimental impacts on B.C.'s tourism industry?
- While it is encouraging that B.C. will be temporarily hiring 1,400 furloughed workers from the tourism and hospitality sector, it amounts to less than one per cent of the entire tourism sector workforce. What additional steps is your government taking to support additional furloughed workers in our cruise ship and tourism sector?
- What measures is your government taking to ensure our tourism sector isn't subject to further or permanent job losses as a result of new public health restrictions?

Our tourism sector has been one of the hardest-hit industries throughout the pandemic. It is estimated the entire B.C. tourism industry lost \$16.4 billion of an annual \$20 billion in GDP in the 2020 season. Tourism will undeniably be a cornerstone of our province's economic recovery and it is paramount that your government offers the industry the supports and protections it needs to ensure it is in a position to make a full recovery as soon as restrictions lift.

Your prompt response will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Teresa Wat

Official Opposition Critic for Tourism, Arts & Culture,
& Anti-Racism Initiatives
MLA, Richmond North Centre