



Tourism Industry Association of Manitoba

June 24, 2025

Hon. Jamie Moses
Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation
Room 358 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Hon. Nellie Kennedy
Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage, and Tourism
Room 118 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Ministers,

As many Manitobans begin the long process of returning home following wildfire evacuations, some with no home to return to, the Tourism Industry Association of Manitoba (TIAM) recognizes the efforts of everyone contributing to the ongoing wildfire response across the province. We also appreciate the Information Sharing Table that was established for tourism and other stakeholders. This table has enabled us to keep our members informed during a dynamic and quickly evolving situation, while raising awareness of the broad impacts on the tourism and hospitality industry.

Tourism operators will continue to step up and help Manitobans

Manitoba's tourism infrastructure, and our visitor economy, includes a robust hospitality network that has been essential to emergency response efforts in providing safe accommodations, meals, and activities for those forced out of their homes and communities.

It is critical that we ensure that this key piece of Manitoba's infrastructure and economy is supported while our collective vigilance against wildfires remains.

Challenges we've faced

Manitoba's announcement requesting all travelers and tourists reconsider non-essential travel to prioritize accommodations for evacuees had wide-ranging and harmful impacts on many tourism operators across the province.

The lack of clarity misled many to believe that this meant people were not welcome here and had to change their plans in order not to take away a room from an evacuee. Many tourism operators were suddenly faced with last-minute cancellations, even if their specific region, service or accommodation would likely never be called upon to host evacuees. Large conferences, often years in the making, cancelled or went virtual weeks in advance. Operators already forced to close during previous fires, finally returned home and reopened, only to have guests cancel.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars that small business owners depend on at this critical time of year have been lost, with no opportunity to recover them. The provincial deferral of retail and payroll taxes help in the short-term, but they will have to be paid eventually.

Our request to the Province of Manitoba

TIAM is calling on Manitoba to recognize the important role that the tourism industry plays time and time again in states of emergency, whether it be fire, flood, or weather, by providing immediate and direct support to affected tourism operators who now face an uncertain future.

Our industry was deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and was the longest to recover, and some businesses never did. In a year when tourism was finally starting to bounce back, Manitoba's tourism operators are now left in an unpredictable situation.

TIAM is ready to work with you to advance solutions to ensure that our visitor economy and hospitality network remain strong during this difficult time and ready to continue to play a role in Manitoba's emergency response efforts. While every emergency is different, we believe there is much we are learning together that will only strengthen our response in the future, ensure clarity in communications, and mitigate the impacts on those who have been displaced from or lost their homes – those who face the greatest uncertainties – and those on the front lines working to keep communities safe.

I look forward to your response and in the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly at john.gunter@tiammanitoba.ca

Sincerely,



John Gunter
Chair, Board of Directors

c.

Michael Jack, Deputy Minister, Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation
Jeff Hnatiuk, Deputy Minister, Sport, Culture, Heritage, and Tourism
TIAM Board