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April 20, 2021

Honourable Melanie Mark
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4
TAC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Re: [BC Meetings & Events Industry Safe Restart Plan Proposal](#) – submitted March 2, 2021.

Dear Minister,

I am writing to follow up on the [Safe Restart Plan Proposal](#) that was delivered by email to the PHO and to your office on March 2, 2021.

The BC Meetings & Events Industry Working Group, on behalf of our sector, is keen to receive an acknowledgement of the proposal and requests an opportunity to meet with the PHO and government to discuss details of the restart plan. As our representative Ministry, our sincere hope is that you can be our champion to facilitate this discussion soon, given that the industry remains sidelined and is desperate for guidance on when we might see a gradual restart to business.

While on the tourism industry roundtable call last Monday, attended by both yourself and the Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Henry alluded to her hope that by early June, we may see restrictions eased and a possible return to the 50-person gathering limit, which is noted as Stage One in our restart proposal. Dr. Henry also mentioned a benchmark level of 30% population immunity as a measure for easing restrictions. We clearly understand that these criteria and timelines are situationally dependent, subject to the ever-changing pandemic conditions.

We strongly believe that if we could hear this hopeful information directly from the voice of government, it would provide insight and optimism to our sector businesses that would allow them to convey confidence to their clients who are themselves eager to sign future contracts. There is demand building for Q3 and Q4 this year and into 2022. Currently, with no anticipated plan or messaging being communicated by government officials, our customers are unable to sign contracts and businesses cannot make plans for survival.

We have attached a copy of a recent statement released by Alberta's Health Minister to their Live Events Industry last week that outlines the Province's objectives. Something similar would be most helpful for British Columbia's meetings and events sector.

On behalf of the BC Meetings & Events Industry Working Group, I thank you for your commitment and support of the tourism industry and ask for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Burns Millar', is positioned over the typed name and title.

Joanne Burns Millar
Chair, BC Meetings & Events Working Group
CEO, Pacific Destination Services Inc.

cc: Neilane Mayhew, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport
Salman Azam, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism Arts, Culture & Sport

April 9, 2021

Dear Stakeholder:

I am providing this letter in response to questions that your sector has raised regarding the potential timing for a return to having an audience for indoor and outdoor music, theatre and other performance events. While we have signalled that with the advancement of vaccinations, we are anticipating the ability to remove restrictions to enable a more normal level of operations by the summer, we acknowledge that the economic challenges you are facing requires the inclusion of an audience as soon as possible.

Alberta continues to closely monitor COVID-19 and the variants of concern and is taking a cautious approach to easing restrictions over the coming months. The government is assessing hospitalizations, cases and related factors to determine the measures that would best address the current context.

At the same time we are continuing to roll out our immunization program, which will continue to provide increased community protection as supplies are available and more Albertans are vaccinated.

In that context, this letter is a proposed outline of the potential timing for the return of audiences. Final allowances for total numbers will be confirmed as we approach these key milestones, noting that if there are opportunities to move these timelines up because of better than anticipated case trends and/or more aggressive progress on vaccines, that will be of utmost priority for us:

- April/Early May: No in-person fans
- Late May: 15% of fixed seating capacity to a Maximum of 100 people outdoors
- Late June: 50% of fixed seating capacity to a Maximum of 500 people outdoors and 15% of fixed seating capacity to a Maximum of 100 people indoors
- Late July: Removal of capacity restrictions

As noted, this is contingent upon the state of cases and associated pressures on the public health care system as well as progress on immunizations. We will continue to work with your sector as we approach these important milestones.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Deena Hinshaw', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Deena Hinshaw, BSc, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCP
Chief Medical Officer of Health
