

Speaking Notes for Hotel Association Members meeting MPs.

Thank you for seeing me.

I am here on behalf of my own hotel in _____ which employs _____ people. I am also here as part of a national industry which needs your help.

The Canadian economy came through the economic crisis better than many others, but that doesn't mean our sector was not hard hit. The hotel industry lost more than \$4 Billion during the recession. The continued malaise of the U.S. economy is crippling our most reliable source of visitors.

I am not here to complain, but to propose action that will help. I have asked to meet you because our sector needs new policies in Ottawa to help us be competitive. We have to fight for the business which came easier in the past.

We need you, as our MP, to speak up for the sector and for our role in this community.

We are partners with the federal government in this effort. Many people in government are not aware of how federal policies in transportation, taxation, human resources and tourism promotion directly affect our businesses.

Travel and Tourism drive economic growth and diversity in every province and territory in Canada. In 2010 Tourism accounted for 1.6 million or 9.2 percent of all jobs in Canada only exceeded by manufacturing and retail. Tourism is bigger than construction, finance and education. It is one of the fastest growing sectors in the global economy yet Canada's share is shrinking. Taxation and Visa policies are the biggest barriers.

The Hotel Association of Canada appreciates your ongoing support of the \$70 billion travel and tourism industry which employs 649,000 people across Canada. The lodging sector is a key component generating \$17.5 billion in revenue, employing 320,000 people and paying \$6.3 billion in taxes including \$2.8 billion to the federal government.

Unfortunately Canada cannot realize its true potential under the current structure. While the global pie is getting bigger, Canada's share is shrinking. The Canada Brand is #1, however we are 15th in foreign arrivals according to the FutureBrand Index. Strong brand interest is not converting into arrivals. In 2000 Canada was the 7th most popular destination in the world with a travel deficit of just over \$1 billion. Today the travel deficit is \$13 billion. Between 2002 and 2009, almost all countries posted international tourist arrival gains except Canada. Restoring Canada back in the top 10 in foreign arrivals would bring 5.7 million more visitors, \$5.2 billion in revenue and 46,900 more jobs. It would generate \$1.5 billion in new taxes.

Canada requires an effective Visa system to facilitate key emerging markets including Brazil, Russia, India, China and Mexico. In addition, this will assist the availability of people to work in the lodging industry under the federal Temporary Foreign Workers Program.

Canada is a “Fly-to” destination and our cost structure is a barrier to success. Exceedingly high airport rents, fuel taxes and security fees have dropped Canada down to 125th position from 109th for aviation cost structure based on the World Economic Forum Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report.

Canada requires sustained marketing funding for the Canadian Tourism Commission in order to effectively market our country abroad.

In the New 41st Parliament we seek your support for the Tourism sector.

Tourism is one of Canada’s largest employers, however it has lost market share. By enhancing Canada’s promotion abroad, supporting more competitive air access and improving Visa processes we can win back market share in tourism and create thousands of jobs.

I am asking you to take our cause back to Ottawa. Please speak to the Ministers responsible such as the Minister of Finance, of Transport, of Industry.

We have prepared a short document discussing some of the policies we need adopted in Ottawa. I would appreciate you taking the time to review it.

This is a national issue, but it is also an urgent issue here in our community. I look forward to your help.

Thank you