



Premier Sandy Silver
Minister Jeanie Dendys
Government of Yukon
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

April 18, 2017

Dear Premier Silver and Minister Dendys:

On behalf of the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon (TIA Yukon) thank you to both of you for taking the time to meet with TIA Yukon's Executive Director, Blake Rogers, and myself last week to discuss the priorities of the Yukon's tourism industry. We appreciate your government's viewpoint that tourism and culture is an integral part of the Yukon and its economy and thank you for your interest in helping the industry to grow.

For your reference, I have attached a summary of the topics and discussion highlights from last week's meeting. We value your partnership and support and look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead.

Please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director, Blake Rogers, should you have any questions or clarifications.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Felix Geithner', written in a cursive style.

Felix Geithner,
Chair

Cc: Murray Arsenault, Deputy Minister, Department of Tourism and Culture
Pierre Germain, Director of Tourism, Department of Tourism and Culture

Appendix A – Summary of tourism meeting, April 11, 2017

Background RE: Meeting Request: TIA Yukon asked for a face-to-face meeting with the Premier within the first 100 days of taking office and at least once each year henceforth as one of our top 3 priorities during the election campaign in response to feedback we received from our members about working to enhance communication between numerous key YG departments and the tourism industry. Tourism is unique in that it has a broad, diverse membership with wide ranging needs; a case could be made for most, if not all departments having some sort of connection to tourism. TIA Yukon appreciates having the opportunity to meet to discuss some of the main priorities of the tourism industry.

Dawson City Runway

- Paving is vital to ensuring a sustained tourism economy in Dawson and can help grow winter tourism in the region.
- The Air North and Holland America deal brings in millions of dollars to the economy each year and can only continue into the future if the runway is paved.
- Paving the runway could also open up other opportunities with other air carriers and flight schedules.

Discussion: The paving of the Dawson City runway remains a priority for the government, however more time is needed to complete due diligence and address regulatory requirements. The government will make a decision that makes the most practical sense and is the best fit for the long term. The runway is a priority, but realistically, it won't be completed in 2017.

Road access/maintenance

- Tourism is greatly impacted by road access, yet there is often a gap in communications between industry and the Departments responsible for the roads - is there any way to enhance communication so that industry can share and receive updates on routes traveled frequently by tourists when they happen? Can Highways & Public Works officials be more accessible to the tourism industry?
- Some operators (ie. Muktuk, Southern Lakes Resort) operate on rural roads that are technically government roads but that are not maintained by the government.

Discussion: More work being done to bring other department officials from Highways and Public Works into the discussion and be more accessible to the tourism industry. Last year, many questions were raised at KVA's Round Up that pertained to things to which Highways & Public Works was responsible, but the only YG person present was a Tourism & Culture official who had to take on the responsibility of passing the message along to those who could have an impact. This, TIA Yukon imagines is challenging for Tourism & Culture reps, as Highways and Public Works has mandates that differ from that of Tourism & Culture. Officials from Highways and Public Works joined the Premier at the KVA Round Up this year and it was very beneficial.

Signage

- Signage often comes up at marketing committee meetings as an issue - the biggest issue is again, communication between industry and departments. Tourism & Culture hears some of the issues that industry raises, but Highways and Public Works is responsible for implementation and oftentimes the original message gets lost down the chain due to miscommunication and different mandates.

Discussion: Signage is an ongoing issue due to cross-departmental communication and mandates, but departments are being encouraged to find ways to work closer together to close communication gaps. Multi-jurisdictional issues between different governments can also be challenging (ie. Alaska border near Dawson/Beaver Creek/Skagway/Haines and British Columbia border near Watson Lake/Atlin, etc.). Destinations such as Iceland have clearly defined signage that helps indicate where things are located so that attractions aren't missed and navigating is easier. Efforts will be made to find avenues for industry to voice specific concerns to YG reps that can help implement solutions.

Funding programs available to industry

- The industry relies on key programs like TCMF to help market their business. It's important to ensure that all programs are operating as effectively as possible to ensure that funds are maximized and that operators are aware of any programs available that they can access. (Most of this would relate to Tourism & Culture and Economic Development)

Discussion: Government is encouraged to know that programs like TCMF are of value to the industry. Government agrees with TIA Yukon that it's prudent that the programs are monitored and reviewed if necessary to ensure that they are operating effectively and efficiently and are meeting the goals they are supposed to. Measuring performance through thorough evaluation is the only way to find out if the programs are successful.

Research

- It's essential to have a solid plan in place to accurately measure and communicate tourism visitor stats.
- Industry is interested in how success is measured: campaigns, programs, etc.

Discussion: From TIAY's perspective, industry would like to be more informed on research and tabulation of visitation statistics, and have a more clear understanding of how and why current data calculation processes are being used. This is an area that is a big priority for the government and of particular interest to the Premier. The Premier is planning to meet with Murray and Pierre to discuss this in more depth. There are likely to be some positive changes in the year ahead on the tourism research front.

Communication & collaboration between YG and industry

- Tourism is so expansive and has indirect impacts on so many aspects of the Yukon, that it could literally touch every department in some way.
- Industry wants to be able to help and has flexibility that may be useful for YG - we're happy to partner. The more we're included in discussions and initiatives the more we'll be able to assist and be able to bring new ideas and perspectives to the table.

Discussion: This also has to do with cross-departmental communication and finding ways that TIA Yukon can be a part of the information flow to send messages to and from the industry and YG. The 'One Government approach' that the government is taking is being encouraged at the departmental level as well. TIA Yukon is making efforts to bring industry representatives together to discuss ways for greater collaboration.

Product development & innovation

This topic wasn't discussed due to the meeting running over time, however, this is a crucial subject area that TIA Yukon would be remiss if we did not highlight it in this summary. It was TIA Yukon's intention to raise the following points on product development:

- Vital that YG supports the development of tourism product - we need to continuously add more depth to the products and experiences that the Yukon can offer in order to remain competitive with other jurisdictions.
- Developments like Takhini Hotsprings, recent tourism trends in some of our developing sectors like culinary tourism, indigenous tourism, agro-tourism, winter tourism - we need YG to foster and support these as much as possible.
- Mechanisms for encouraging innovation will help strengthen the industry and will be applauded by industry.