

September 14, 2023

The Honourable Soraya Martinez Ferrada  
Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the  
Region of Quebec  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario,  
Canada  
K1A 0A6

Sent via email

Dear Minister Martinez Ferrada,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO). At TIAO, we work on behalf of our membership, collectively representing the majority of tourism businesses and employees across the province to take on pressing policy issues that impact the Ontario tourism industry.

We have heard from our members about the local and regional impact of China's ongoing travel ban on group tours to Canada.

China is normally a major contributor to the Ontario and Canadian tourism economy. China is Canada's second-largest long-haul market and our country's largest market in terms of visitor spend. In 2019, Canada welcomed 708,000 Chinese leisure visitors, who spent approximately \$2 billion. Notably, Chinese visitors tend to stay longer, significantly boosting visitor spending: in 2019, Chinese travellers spent on average \$2,900 per trip, staying for an average of 44 nights. Importantly, Ontario is the number one Canadian destination for Chinese visitors. In 2019, the Chinese visitor market injected approximately \$739 million into Ontario's economy. Furthermore, pre-pandemic projections hinted at growth trajectory, with expected spending in Ontario surpassing \$1 billion annually.

With nearly 60% of Chinese visitor spending abroad normally channelled through group tours and packages, the economic repercussions of the ban have been substantial. This past June, Chinese visitation to Canada was down 69% compared to 2019, with Ontario seeing a 72% reduction in Chinese visitors. Tourism revenue reductions have been felt acutely in Ontario regions. Chinese visitor spending in Ontario declined by 44% in 2022 compared to 2019, with Ottawa and Countryside seeing a 73% decline. From Toronto to Kingston and to Ottawa, individual operators who rely on the Chinese visitor market have reported significant financial impacts, ranging from revenue losses of 25% to business being 90% down

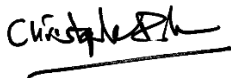
While the tourism industry has made strides towards recovery, it remains a journey fraught with challenges. The ban has dealt a severe blow to those efforts for many of our tourism operators, exacerbating the financial implications of staggering debt loads, critical labour gaps, inflation, and rising commercial costs. In fact, according to a Nanos study commissioned by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC), 45% of Canada's tourism businesses may close within the next three years without government intervention into their mounting debt load. Without access to a critical visitor market, the likelihood of closure may come sooner for many tourism operators.

**To allow for tourism businesses to have the opportunity to fully recover—across Ontario and across Canada—we urge the federal government to explore solutions to address this group travel ban.**

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss further with your office. Please feel free to contact me at [cbloore@tiaontario.ca](mailto:cbloore@tiaontario.ca)

Thank you for your consideration.

Kindest regards,



**Christopher Bloore**  
President & CEO  
Tourism Industry Association of Ontario

Cc: The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs