

Industry Calls May 5, 2020

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The following is a digest of the questions asked in the conference calls hosted by TIAO. We've done our best to find the answers you need, provided links where we can, and commit to taking your concerns forward in our discussions with government officials.

Key Messages/Updates from TIAO:

- Province has taken small steps to reopening and we continue to track other regions.
 - Expanded curb side pickup for some types of businesses; also given golf courses and marinas the ability to start preparation.
 - NOTO, Indigenous Tourism Ontario and TIAO are making a similar request for rural and northern operations (such as seasonal businesses) that need to start preparations for the season.
- There are a few things that will have an impact on the border opening such as screening processes and contact tracing procedures.
- Germany extended their travel ban until June 15th; Spain until June 20th.
- Thanks for all responses to the 4th survey, especially the long answer question. It was incredibly valuable and created momentum for TIAO. A direct impact has been our insurance ask. We've now completed and sent a letter to Minister Phillips, Minister of Finance. We used numbers coming out of that survey to emphasize our points. Click [here](#) for the full list of asks. Share with your local MPP or write your own letter to Minister Phillips.
- In partnership with OBIA and EDCO, a [letter](#) which focuses on rent relief and freezing rent evictions was sent to Ontario Finance Minister Rod Phillips.
- TIAO has been in conversation with TIAC about launching a letter writing campaign regarding the challenges that many in our industry have faced in accessing the current relief programs and the need for a tourism sector specific program.
- Last week's newsletter mentioned the list of advisory panels. Beth is on 4 of the panels. Each panel has been encouraged to solicit feedback from the industry (through one on one conversations, creating official subcommittees or by email).
- TIAO's virtual AGM is scheduled for Wednesday, May 27th.

Northern Ontario Tourism

Number of participants: 69

Homework: Provide us with your ideas around regulations and changes that can be made. This is your way to get your thoughts and ideas to the Minister. Send to feedback@tiaontario.ca. Include your full name, company and phone number.

Questions and comments:

- 1) Can you provide a little more specific details regarding the homework? Ideas for regulations? Changes?

Think about the pain points within your business and how we can work to ease them – such as water testing, regulations around environment, removing fuel sur charge, rebates on other taxes, changes to EI program that might affect those on seasonal layoffs, etc.

- 2) Any road tax rebates on fuel?

Ontario's Gasoline Tax Act states:

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 534: MISCELLANEOUS

under Gasoline Tax Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. G.5

3. (2) The Minister may, upon application from a purchaser, refund the tax paid on gasoline used in Ontario if,

(a) the gasoline was used exclusively in a business, industry or institution and for business, industrial or institutional purposes that are not excluded by regulation from the application of this subsection;

- 3) I received an email from the Kenora District Camp Owners Association about Fort Frances. It discusses setting up appointments to cross the border. Are you aware of this?

We have the 2 documents we need (offer for employment and application for work permit) so why can't we get the work permit online?

NOTO: We heard from Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) that they are thinking ahead and planning a process to be able to make appointments (as they know people will be eager) to administer work permits efficiently and effectively and not have people frustrated to get across. Waiting on more details.

Comment: It would be great if the CBSA would accept the documents in advance so that processing at appointment time would be reduced.

- 4) A) Is there any movement on American business owners being allowed to cross the border before its wide open? B) Any thoughts or ideas on a date of the border opening to USA residents?

<http://noto.ca/COVID19#BORDERS>

The next review of this closure is set to take place on May 20th, with the possibility of an extension. There is no timeline as to when the Canada-USA border may re-open.

- 5) Regarding insurance, one of the bigger issues is the liability risk operators may face associated with opening in any capacity where guests or employees may contract COVID-19. Even if operators adopt new PH protocols, how can we operate with some peace of mind on this issue?

Treat it as if someone was injured on your property. What is your liability? Back up everything you are doing. Document all training with staff, protocols in place around sanitation, health and safety and physical distancing. Shows you put effort into managing the risk. Consult your lawyer and insurance brokers.

Comment:

I spoke with my insurance company and they said that we wouldn't be liable if a guest contracted COVID-19 while staying at my lodge.

- 6) Camping in Ontario has suggested that properties with cabins will need to leave cabins empty for at least 24 hours to properly sanitize them. Is this something recommended? Mandatory?

Nothing is recommended or mandatory at this time. Waiting for input from the Ministry of Health about how long the virus can live on surfaces. Suggesting 24hrs in between is appropriate right now. Camping in Ontario is also working on this.

There is a task force (resorts, camping, Northern Ontario, hotels, and the corporate hotel brands) to get to a solution that is scalable for all business sizes to use. We will share once completed.

- 7) Discussions around UV lights: Where do you get a UV machine and chemicals?

Comments:

- UV has potential to disinfect rooms in 15-30 minutes.
- You need UV type C to be really effective, preferably with ozone. Higher Wattage as well. Type that you turn on remotely so people are not in the room
- UV lights are not mandatory. I would hold off on ordering any right now. Still lots of discussion.
- There is also lots of discussion on air filtration systems that may be effective in certain situations. More research will have to be done.
- TIAO will share once we know what tools are required.

- 8) If all that is being offered to small business is a loan of \$40k, potential of \$10k forgivable, how about increasing it to sustain our businesses? Many seasonal businesses will be without revenue for 18 months. \$40k isn't enough to pay property tax, utilities, and the occasional meal.

There are further loans available through BDC, as well, you can speak to your local community futures office, access CEWS (if you have staff), or CERB.

- 9) Have COVID protocols for tourism camps been completed yet and/or posted somewhere?

Camping in Ontario is working on protocols.

NOTO is working on the sector protocols right now.

- 10) Should we expect to see clear guidelines as to what constitutes a "mass gathering" event. Would it be a tiered approach month by month? AB and QC seem to be ahead of ONT on this.

Ontario has not released that information yet.

- 11) What about financial assistance for resorts that do not qualify for any current programs due to the fact they are owner/family operated and do not take wages

TIAO will continue to take this information forward; consistently part of our conversation and we are in discussion with TIAC to take this message to the Minister of Finance.

- 12) How do you feel about having guests sign a waiver acknowledging the risks of COVID?

Waivers are a tool that can be used and was addressed on the April 21st calls (see TIAO website for minutes).

NOTO: Part of the working group is bringing in representatives from the insurance industry. They will be looking at sample waivers that can be used for resorts and lodges.

- 13) As a business that pays monthly, we cannot apply for the wage subsidy for period 3 (May 10-June 6) until we pay our employees in July. This isn't very helpful. We need help now. Is there any chance of a speedier or simpler application process?

We are working every day to get a resolution to get some kind of relief.

- 14) Are there any rural operators facing push back from Municipalities and or FN about opening up and the influx of seasonal residents and tourist. If so what messaging can we send to reassure them that safe practices are in play?

We have seen some municipalities pushing back about those with secondary residences coming to cottage country. The Premier is starting to change his language as well. Hopefully this will resolve soon. No timelines right now. For the most part, those using their secondary residence during this period are following proper protocols and not infringing on local residents.

NOTO: Once protocols are in place for the Resource based tourism sector and other sectors, it will be important to communicate this to the municipalities to reassure them that the resorts (and guests) are taking the necessary precautions to provide a safe environment.

Comment:

I think a PR campaign to reassure locals who are apprehensive about bringing in hordes of tourists is key, so we don't face a backlash which will be just as damaging.

Camping in Ontario is working on a code of conduct for guests.

- 15) Is Ontario considering a regional approach to opening the economy since rural regions have very low COVID-19 rates?

Not that we are aware of.

- 16) Is it confirmed that seasonal operators that rehire laid off staff or have newly hired staff are eligible for the 75% wage subsidy?

Yes, as long as you meet the eligibility requirements.

You will have to show losses and seasonal operators won't be able to show losses until end of May. The program is only available until June 6th but NOTO, TIAO and others are pushing for extensions.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy.html>

- 17) Our feeling is that American clientele entering Canada for leisure will be far in the future, possibly not at all this season; possibly some Canadian visitors later in summer. Your realistic prediction?

We can't make that prediction.

- 18) Do you think the border will be taking American travellers temperature and possible turn back?

This is possible.

- 19) Is someone talking to the government about Air B n B and other accommodators that are renting and shouldn't be?

Air B n B has published on their host site, for all regions, if you can or cannot accept guests. They are included as an option for essential workers who need to self-isolate.

They are currently working on protocols for when they reopen.

<https://www.airbnb.ca/resources/hosting-homes/t/coronavirus-updates-34>

<https://www.airbnb.ca/resources/hosting-homes/a/coming-soon-a-new-enhanced-cleaning-initiative-for-hosts-183>

- 20) The WHO has established guidelines for when to start relaxing restrictions. Have you heard if that's what public health and Ontario is following? If so some good indications there for industry.

The province is following the advice of the Public Health Officer. The Chief Medical Officers (provincially and federally) are making these decisions.

RTOs

Number of participants: 12

Questions and comments:

- 1) In terms of the release of the results from Survey 4, what is the status?

The report is out. The regional and sectoral divisions will be provided soon. Will be uploaded into the SharePoint at some point.

- 2) Are the heads of the panels noted so we can reach out to them?

You will have access to all the share panel sections.

Tourism Operators and Educators

Number of participants: 107

Request: Provide us with your ideas around regulations, changes that can be made and any pain points. This is your way to get your thoughts and ideas up to the Minister through the advisory panels. Send to feedback@tiaontario.ca. Include your full name, company and phone number.

Questions and comments:

- 1) Where do we find the list of the committees and their contact information?

The contact information for the committees has not been shared but the list of committees were in our previous newsletter.

- 2) Everyone is using the term "new normal", however, I have not heard a definition? Are we prepared to use the term "temporary new normal"?

The new normal will be constantly changing as we move through the next couple of years and find a vaccine.

- 3) Is there a subcommittee for tourist operators? Where do we fit in?

There are operators on these panels. Each panel has been encouraged to reach out to the industry. You can also send your suggestions to TIAO, feedback@tiaontario.ca

- 4) How quickly does TIAO need ideas and input?

It will be a quick turnaround. Will need it by next week. Draft reports need to be written by May 14th. The final report to the Minister is due May 24th.

- 5) Specifically what committees is TIAO directly involved in?

Beth is sitting on the following panels: Hotel and Hospitality, Air Travel, Tourism Leaders, and the Festival, Events and local community.

Alexandra Rodgers, Director of Policy and Research, is working behind the scenes on a subcommittee, specifically on research and the economic impact on workforce and

business practices.

- 6) Emergency Orders are due to expire tomorrow. (May 6th). Any update?

Next announcement about the border closure is on May 20th.

Update as of May 6th: State of Emergency extended until May 19th.

- 7) Is it true that an announcement will be made this week on US camp owners being able to cross?

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) are preparing and planning a process to be able to make appointments, as they know people will be eager to get across. Waiting on more details.

- 8) Is there a sub-committee for agri-tourism?

Not specifically. There is work on rural resorts and northern Ontario under the Hotel and Hospitality Panel as well as within the Tourism Leaders Panel (subcommittees for rural, outdoor rec and niche market committees). But also share your thoughts through your RTO or TIAO.

- 9) Lots of concern on what the best practices should be for dealing with guests.

Sector associations are working with their members to develop protocols. You can also access the guidelines available on WSPS.

<https://www.wsp.ca/WSPS/media/Site/Resources/Downloads/Pandemic-Recovery-Return-to-Business-Checklist.pdf?ext=.pdf>

TIAO is working collaboratively across jurisdictions to bring any ideas forward that would also meet best practices.

- 10) Can you send around the list of the different sector association that are working on these practices?

List will be available on our website soon.

- 11) Will there be any protocols coming out from public health or just WSPS?

We are not certain about Public Health's involvement. There are 32 public health authorities across the province so we want to ensure there is continuity across.

- 12) Guidelines for capacity?

Still 5 people max and physical distancing still required. When that changes we will advise.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario-after-covid-19>

- 13) Who supersedes who in protocol? Regional Public Health or province?

Our understanding is that the provincial chief medical officer has the ultimate say. We are getting more clarity and hope to have an update next week.

Sector Association

Number of participants: 30

Questions:

- 1) How do we get these type of protocols in front of municipal councillors in rural Ontario, so they understand that many business owners are doing critical thinking about how to keep their rural communities safe and ensuring these businesses can earn some revenue this season?

This will need to be raised with the provincial government and our tourism champions. We can disseminate this information to municipal council members and share the protocols that are being developed.

Comments:

- Resorts Ontario is currently on the final stages of their business continuity manual. It will cover all of the key facets of a resort operation: guest check-in, pools, recreation, banquet, maintenance, kitchen, high touch points, engagement with staff and guests. Includes the protocols listed under WSPS.
- Attractions Ontario and working groups would like to see the province get away from designated phases for reopening. Some attractions can operate like a golf course. Need a set of protocols that if businesses can meet them, then they can open. Fear that some businesses will be left out. This would then put the onus on the business.

IAAPA, the Global Association for the Attractions Industry, released a set of protocols for amusement parks and attractions to open in the USA. AO will follow suit.

For more information about Attractions Ontario's efforts:

www.saveourattractions.ca

- We need some guidance and consistency for non-profits, business operators and organizations who organize events, before they spend more money on deposits and materials.
- Meeting Means Business Canada – there may be an opportunity to engage at the federal level. TIAC is their secretariat and has regular meetings with the Federal Ministers: <https://www.meetingsmeanbusiness.ca/leadership>
- Ontario Museums Association - No immediate relief for the museums; funds not flowing yet.
https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/news/2020/04/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-new-support-to-protect-canadian-jobs.html#Cultural_Heritage
- France's destination marketing organization has developed a tool showing all the travel bans throughout the world -
<https://datastudio.google.com/reporting/d14bf11f-8788-4c59-b8bd-3b545f8d19e5/page/XNxJB?s=pFHDtF30WJU>

DMOs

Number of participants: 74

TIAO wants to ensure you all have an opportunity to share your ideas which will be uploaded to the advisory committees. Check our social media channels to participate in our questionnaire, May 7th to 10th. Or contact us directly at feedback@tiaontario.ca

Questions and comments:

- 1) Can you expand on rent relief?

[Letter](#) sent to Minister Phillips, Minister of Finance & Chair of the Ontario Jobs and Recovery committee, outlining that SME's are not getting access to rent relief programs as it's in the hands of the landlords. We are asking that it be in the hands of the tenant as well as a freeze on evictions for the next 6 months.

Comment:

Great to see the recommended changes for rent relief! 1 in 5 landlords is a sad #, however, will be interesting to see how the landlords shift when/ if university's announce online programming for Fall.

- 2) Any word on grants for summer students?

No updates yet. We will advise once we hear.

Comment:

We received a Canada Student Jobs email to fill out a survey.

- 3) One of our main concerns right now is the upcoming May long weekend and day trippers who are being encouraged to get outdoors (and to a lesser extent cottagers). We may not be ready for the influx if the province opens up regulations to allow them to travel. Has TIAO heard of any new developments on this? Also are any others concerned about this and are you looking at any messaging to discourage visitors from coming if this short distance travel is encouraged?

There are pockets around the province that are taking a harder view than others. There are no new developments. We will have to rebuild trust in communities.

DMOS can help to mitigate these kinds of messages. While still adhering to public health advice, we need to remind visitors that they will be welcomed back when they are ready to come back.

- 4) Has survey 4 been drilled down to RTO levels?

Coming soon!

Resources:

- **DestinationNEXT** – Provides an assessment of your destination and your destination organization; gives you a roadmap of how to move forward on areas you may be having shortfalls; helps to build on your strategic plan.

- They have designed a new program called **Organization Next** – idea is to help organizations plan through the COVID-19 crisis and prepare a 6 to 18 month short term strategic plan. Link to their survey:
<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/DMO-Survey---Sondage-sur-les-OMD.html?soid=1103726288554&aid=ewaKAiSPv6s>

Additional Resources:

- **Essential Workplaces List:** <https://www.ontario.ca/page/list-essential-workplaces>
- **Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/economic-response-plan.html>
- **Canadian Federation of Small Businesses (CFIB):** <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/en/advocacy/federal-government-banks-small-business-relief-measures-covid-19>
- **Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program (OCECRA):** <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/04/ontario-canada-emergency-commercial-rent-assistance-program.html>
- **Business Pandemic Preparedness Checklist:** https://www.wspcs.ca/WSPS/media/Site/Resources/Downloads/Bsnss_Pndmc_Prprdnss_Chcklst_FINAL.pdf
- **Return to Work Protocols from Workplace Safety & Prevention Services :** <https://www.wspcs.ca/WSPS/media/Site/Resources/Downloads/Pandemic-Recovery-Return-to-Business-Checklist.pdf?ext=.pdf>
- **Ontario's Framework for reopening:** <https://silkstart.s3.amazonaws.com/067e0330-2872-45a7-8dd0-445c5aaa5dc1.pdf>
- **Tourism HR Canada's Free online training:** www.emerit.ca/en/emeritforfree
- **Destination Ontario Contact:** do.partnerships@ontario.ca
- **Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC):** https://tiac-aitc.ca/_Impact_on_Tourism.html
- **Destination Canada:** <https://www.destinationcanada.com/en/coronavirus-updates/covid-19-research>
- **Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association:** <http://www.orhma.com/>

We look forward to speaking with you again soon