

May 13, 2020

Task Force Releases Rescue and Recovery Priorities for Greater Victoria Tourism Industry

VICTORIA, B.C. – Tourism leaders in Greater Victoria endorsed a suite of measures to help the struggling Greater Victoria tourism industry through the COVID-19 pandemic. The Greater Victoria Tourism Rescue and Recovery Task Force (Task Force) is a group of twelve tourism business leaders from the hotel, transportation and attraction sectors, as well as destination marketing organizations. The priorities are outlined in a document released today. The Task Force will also update its priorities as the recovery evolves over the next 18 months.

“Tourism and hospitality are amongst the hardest hit economic sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic” said Paul Nursey, CEO of Destination Greater Victoria. “In Greater Victoria, it is expected visitor spending will decline by up to \$1.4 billion over the next ten to 14 months. This affects the ability of countless businesses to operate and creates uncertainty for thousands of workers employed in the industry.”

The Task Force has prioritized five requests for government that are critical to support tourism businesses immediately and going forward:

- Extending the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) well into 2021.
- Extending the 16-week period before severance is required for staff on temporary layoff, as well as flexibility on group lay-off provisions for tourism’s highly seasonal workforce.
- Interest-free loans, grants, subsidies, or similar financial supports.
- Support for COVID-19 safety oriented and physical social-distancing measures.
- Redirect Destination Canada and Destination BC marketing funds from traditional international source markets to domestic source markets at the community level for the short term upon approved restart.

“Our goal was to create concrete, workable solutions for government decision-makers” said John Wilson, President and CEO of The Wilson’s Group of Companies. “We want to put the tourism industry back on a stable footing and contribute once again to the Greater Victoria community. Time is of the essence. If we do not act soon there will be permanent job losses and dire consequences for many small and medium-sized businesses in our region.”

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Greater Victoria tourism industry created \$2.3 billion in economic impact and employed more than 22,000 people. Two in five workers in Greater Victoria are directly or indirectly employed in the tourism industry. Tourism is also a major employer of young adults and people with disabilities. Loss of travelers from key source markets due to necessary health and safety considerations for COVID-19 has greatly reduced visitation to Greater Victoria.

Further details on the Task Force’s priorities are outlined in the document here:

https://www.tourismvictoria.com/sites/default/files/gv_tourism_rescuerecovery_taskforce_web.pdf

DESTINATION GREATER VICTORIA

Destination Greater Victoria (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is our region's official, not-for-profit destination marketing organization working in partnership with nearly 1,000 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria.

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BACKGROUNDER

Greater Victoria Tourism Rescue and Recovery Task Force members:

FRANK BOURREE

CEO, Bourree & Associates

Frank Bourree has been actively involved in Greater Victoria's community and tourism, hospitality, human resources, and consulting sectors for more than 40 years. Frank is Vice Chair of the South Island Prosperity Partnership, Chair of the Our Place Community Advisory Board, and a Past Chair of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce.

DAVE COWEN

CEO, The Butchart Gardens

Dave Cowen has more than 30 years experience in the tourism industry, including 13 as General Manager and CEO of The Butchart Gardens. Dave is Chair of the Board of the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, Co-Chair of the Tourism Committee for the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER), and a Past Chair of Destination Greater Victoria's Board of Directors.

ANTHONY EVERETT

President and CEO, Tourism Vancouver Island

Anthony Everett joined Tourism Vancouver Island in January 2018 and has over 30 years of experience in destination marketing, sport tourism, media relations, visitor services and Board governance.

SUZANNE GATRELL

Owner, Kingsbridge Hotel Consulting

Suzanne Gatrell has more than 30 years experience in tourism and hospitality, including 12 years in Greater Victoria. Suzanne is Chair of Destination Greater Victoria's Transportation and Destination Management Committee.

KIMBERLEY HUGHES

General Manager, Delta Hotels by Marriott Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort

Kimberley Hughes has more than 30 years of tourism and hospitality experience, including 12 years in Greater Victoria. Kimberley is Chair of Destination Greater Victoria's Board of Directors.

DESTINATION GREATER VICTORIA

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DAN KUKAT

Owner and President, Springtide Whale Watching & Eco Tours

Dan Kukat started Springtide Whale Watching & Eco Tours 27 years ago, combining his passion for being on the ocean, his desire to live in Victoria and his interest in running his own business. Dan is a Past Chair of the Pacific Whale Watch Association.

BILL LEWIS

General Manager, The Magnolia Hotel & Spa

Bill Lewis has a diverse background in the hotel sector, with more than 25 years of experience and 15 years in management roles in Victoria. Bill is Chair of the Hotel Association of Greater Victoria and a Past Chair of Destination Greater Victoria's Board of Directors.

PAUL NURSEY

CEO, Destination Greater Victoria

Paul Nursey has more than 25 years of tourism and hospitality experience, including 20 years in leadership roles in destination management and six years in Greater Victoria.

BRENDA OLLIS

General Manager, Chateau Victoria Hotel

Brenda Ollis has 32 years of experience in tourism and hospitality, all in Greater Victoria. Brenda is Treasurer of the Victoria Hotel Destination Marketing Association.

THE REV'D CANON IAN POWELL

General Manager, Inn at Laurel Point and Managing Director, Paul's Restaurants Ltd

The Rev'd Canon Ian Powell has more than 45 years of tourism and hospitality experience, with more than 30 years in senior leadership roles. Ian has contributed to Greater Victoria's tourism industry for more than 40 years. Ian is Chair of go2HR's Board of Directors and a past Chair of Destination Greater Victoria.

JOHN WILSON

President and CEO, The Wilson's Group of Companies

Led by John Wilson, The Wilson's Group has been an active member of Greater Victoria's business and tourism community for 40 years. John is Chair of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce.

RANDY WRIGHT

President, Harbour Air Group

Randy Wright has 43 years of tourism and hospitality experience, all in Greater Victoria. Randy is a Past Chair of Destination Greater Victoria.

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