

Tourism Golden
PO Box 20181
521 9th Avenue North
Golden
B.C. V0A 1H0



Attn: Karen Cathcart
Area A Director
Columbia Shuswap Regional District Area A
Golden, BC

June 7th, 2018

RE: CRITICAL LABOUR SHORTAGES IN GOLDEN

Dear Karen

Tourism Golden is the Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) for Golden and Area A. Tourism is a primary economic driver in Golden and Area A, with visitation and visitor spend increasing exponentially since 2007.

Golden businesses are experiencing a critical shortage of labour. Despite implementing a cohesive and sophisticated approach to recruiting seasonal staff, our stakeholder businesses are unable to operate at maximum capacity, impacting revenue generation and guest service levels. At least one reports not being able to operate viably due to the chronic lack of seasonal staff, and is considering closing. Where businesses remain operational, we have seen management burnout, contributing to further loss of staff. Our 2017 visitor study demonstrated a drop in Net Promoter Score, as businesses are unable to provide the services and experiences required to meet visitor expectations.

We have concerns for our stakeholder businesses, the local tourism economy, and for our organisation which promotes Golden as a vacation destination. These are:

- Short-term cancellation of accommodation reservations, particularly for wedding groups, could attract a storm of negative publicity for the destination.
- Stories spread through social media of poor services levels and experiences will affect destination reputation and future visitation.
- Loss of MRDT revenue for the DMO will impact our strategic and tactical activity that sustains the growth of tourism, one of Golden's largest industries and economic drivers.
- Visitors are future residents, business owners and taxpayers. Reduction in visitation or destination reputation will have a long-term impact on the community.
- A loss of permanent employment positions if businesses are forced to close temporarily or permanently. Families losing permanent positions may have to leave Golden to find similar employment, taking kids out of school, taxpayers out of the municipality, and valuable skills out of the local workforce.

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Whilst Tourism Golden is ready to participate in any way possible within our resources and mandate in a community effort to mitigate the situation for our tourism stakeholders, we strongly believe that this is an issue that should be led by an economic development function that can provide a strategic approach and focussed tactical implementation.

However, In the absence of a local economic development function, we are seeking action from the CSRD Board to lobby both federal and provincial governments for urgent review of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, the Provincial Nominee Program, and any other existing or new immigration and employment programs that would broaden the pool of available and affordable unskilled employees for small business in rural tourism-based communities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JSweeting", followed by a stylized flourish.

Joanne Sweeting
Executive Director