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Tourism Industry

What is your knowledge of Tourism Kamloops and its role in the city?

My involvement on other boards and committees in the City as well as my work as an economist have helped me become familiar with the history of Tourism Kamloops and its current initiatives.

How does your party view tourism as an industry and government priority relative to other sectors of British Columbia's economy?

Tourism is a basic sector, meaning it draws wealth into the region and province.

Tourism holds considerable potential to continue to grow and diversify; however, it also faces some increasing challenges, making it a sector that needs to receive on-going focus provincially to ensure that it remains vibrant and healthy.

If elected, how would you advocate for tourism in our region?

Working as an economist for the past 30 years in BC in economic development, land use planning and impact assessments I will be advocating in three critical areas in the next legislator, including:

1) Land Act: This Act will be revised and will change access for many land based tourism operators. Already the province has indicated that tourism land base tenures can be cancelled without requiring compensation. This is a considerable cost to the sector that is not just.

2) Climate Impacts: As author of the tourism impacts of the 2017 wildfires in the southern interior for KRTA and TOTA members, I am well aware of the impacts of climate events on the tourism sector and the needs that go along with making fundamental changes to diversify and support the sector in the climate change area.

3) Labour force: In general, the tourism sector is going to face on-going challenges with access to workers with the required skills to make the sector strong. I recently completed a membership survey of employees in the ski guiding industry and see the many challenges that face the sector that need to be tackled.

A key to encouraging more investment will be to ensure we have certainty on the land base. This will be critical for all tourism investment.

Tourism Recovery and Promotion

How will your party help BC's tourism and hospitality industry rebuild a skilled workforce in the ongoing recovery of the industry?

Supporting the BC's tourism and hospitality industry in rebuilding a skilled workforce through:

- 1. Continuing to support Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport in implementing the Strategic Framework for Tourism in BC and renew it in 2025*

2. *Continuing to support go2hr as the tourism and hospitality leader in human resource development*
3. *Encouraging greater workplace diversity that will expand the labour supply and provide industry with the human resources needed to grow product*

In addition, the BC Green platform will see the creation of sustainable opportunities and workforce development – we will introduce a careers program for the food, beverage and hospitality sector.

What will your party do to encourage more investment in the tourism and hospitality sector to help build the visitor economy and bolster local communities?

Three items should be considered including:

1. *Continue to have Destination BC offer destination development programs to communities and regions that will target new/improved visitor infrastructure (e.g. roads, signage, trails, visitor centres, etc.), product and experience development and industry/operator competitiveness*
2. *Continue to promote seasonal and geographic dispersion so the visitor economy is more year-round and generates more benefits for rural communities*
3. *Provide more resources for local government and communities on how the visitor economies work and how local government especially can support it.*

How will your party help build Indigenous tourism to develop and promote market-ready Indigenous experiences?

Continue to implement what is already underway, specifically:

1. *Continue to work closely with Indigenous Tourism BC and Indigenous Tourism Canada who lead in this area*
2. *Encourage local MRDT communities (DMOs) to work closely on economic reconciliation with local area First Nations.*

What will your party do to help struggling tourism businesses that have been directly impacted by one or more emergency situations like wildfires, drought, floods, or other crises to remain solvent?

As we are learning the impact of climate change events can be high, a study by the Centre for Policy Alternatives estimated the economic costs of the 2021 back-to-back extreme weather events was between \$10.6 billion and \$17.1 billion.

The key here is how do we mitigate these events moving forward. We need to address the pathways to these impacts. As we now see, the tourism industry is experiencing follow-on impacts of the climate change area. For example, after four consecutive smoked filled years in the Okanagan we

are seeing visitors reducing the length of their stay in the area from the traditional two week stay to one week. This is having a significant impact beyond the one-time shocks experienced by the initial fire events themselves and if it continues will further erode viability for the sector.

Moving forward the province needs to work more closely with the tourism business sector to:

- 1. Prepare tourism business to be better prepared for future events;*
- 2. Supporting businesses in becoming more competitive within their market space (expanding season, diversifying products);*
- 3. Work with the local and regional DMOs on seasonal programs and expanding outreach.*

Further the BC Greens are moving forward to address the root causes of extreme weather events caused by the climate change area. One specific is a \$100 million commitment to the watershed stewardship councils were all participants together to better manage our water resources reflecting a full range of values in the management of critical watersheds.

Understanding MRDT Priorities

How would you describe your current understanding of the MRDT (Municipal and Regional District Tax) in Kamloops?

I have worked in other municipalities with the MRDT. I am that Kamloops has the 3% MRDT and it was put in place with strong support by the accommodation sector.

Will your party retain the Municipal & Regional District Tax (MRDT) for its original intended purposes – tourism marketing, projects, programs?

I would see a collaboration in determining the priorities of how the MRDT would be allocated. The BC Greens would work collaboratively with partner groups to determine the priorities that best support the tourism sector.