



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tourism Industry Association of BC Celebrates 50 Years of Leadership and Advocacy

Vancouver, BC – (April 8, 2026) – The Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia (TIABC) is proud to announce that 2026 marks its 50th Anniversary - an extraordinary milestone celebrating five decades of as BC's Voice of Tourism through leadership, collaboration, and advocacy for BC's tourism industry.

The roots of TIABC date back to 1975, when the idea for a unified provincial tourism voice first emerged under the guidance of founding manager Duncan Myers while managing the Cariboo Tourist Association (known today as the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association). This vision came to life in 1976 with the formal establishment of the association.

In 1978, Rick Antonson joined as part-time Managing Director while concurrently leading Southwestern BC Tourism Association (recognized today as the Vancouver, Coast and Mountains Tourism Region), helping to further shape the organization's early direction and impact. More recently, Walt Judas led the organization as CEO from 2015 until his retirement earlier this month, with Amber Papou now at the helm, continuing TIABC's legacy of strong leadership.

Over the past five decades, TIABC has evolved alongside British Columbia's dynamic tourism sector. Originally operating as the Tourism Industry Association of BC from 1976 to 1989, the organization was rebranded as the Council of Regional Tourism Associations, reflecting a period of strengthened regional collaboration. From 1993 through the early 2000s, it was known as the Council of Tourism Associations of BC (COTA), before returning to its current name - one that continues to represent a unified, province-wide voice for the tourism industry.

"This 50-year milestone is a testament to the vision, dedication, and leadership of those who came before us", said Amber Papou, CEO, TIABC. "We are deeply grateful to the many Managers, Managing Directors, Executive Administrators, Presidents, and CEOs who have guided TIABC through decades of change, growth, and opportunity. Their collective contributions have shaped not only this organization, but the strength and resilience of BC's tourism industry."

Throughout 2026, TIABC will commemorate its 50th Anniversary with a series of initiatives, events, and storytelling that honour its rich history while celebrating the people, partnerships, and progress that define the organization today.

As TIABC looks to the future, it remains committed to its mission of advocating for a strong, sustainable, and competitive tourism industry across British Columbia, building on 50 years of collaboration and leadership.

About the Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia (TIABC)

The Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia is the province's leading advocacy organization for the tourism sector, representing businesses, destinations, and stakeholders across BC. TIABC works to influence policy, build industry alignment, and support the growth and success of tourism throughout the province.

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