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Newsroom

*News Release*

## **Ontario Establishes Tourism Economic Recovery Task Force**

March 10, 2021

### **Members will provide recommendations on rebuilding and reshaping the future of tourism**

TORONTO — The Ontario government announced the new Tourism Economic Recovery Ministerial Task Force. It will be chaired by former MPP and Cabinet minister Tim Hudak, and give expert advice and recommendations on how to help the province's \$36-billion tourism industry recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Details were provided today by Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries.

"The impact of COVID-19 has been absolutely devastating for Ontario's tourism industry," said Minister MacLeod. "The Tourism Economic Task Force will play a vital role in helping our government rebuild and reshape the future of tourism in our province. It is critical to help industry organizations, operators and communities find new ways to engage Ontarians and, when it is safe to do so, reconnect tourists from at home and abroad with everything our province has to offer."

The mandate of the voluntary task force includes providing strategies and advice that will help position Ontario and its local communities as destinations of choice for travel, as well as identifying products and experiences that enhance destination development. It will also offer a forum for sector partners and leaders to share ideas, collaborate, and provide advice and information to the minister on approaches to support the economic recovery of Ontario's tourism industry. The tourism sector supports more than 400,000 jobs provincially.

"Like so many Ontarians, my family and I cannot wait for the chance to travel across Ontario and enjoy the incredible attractions, heritage, beauty and culture of our province when it is safe to do

so," said Tim Hudak, Chair of the Tourism Economic Recovery Ministerial Task Force. "I am tremendously honoured that Minister MacLeod has asked me to lead this task force to support the desire of countless Ontarians to get out of their homes and support our local businesses, operators and attractions as they have been struggling through this very difficult period."

The task force will deliver a report with its recommendations to the minister in spring 2021.

## QUICK FACTS

- Through the 2020 Budget, [Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support, Recover](#), the government is committed to providing Ontario residents with support of up to 20 per cent for eligible Ontario tourism expenses to encourage them to safely rediscover Ontario in 2021, the year of the Ontario staycation. The province has set aside \$150 million for this initiative and will be consulting with stakeholders about the details.
- Travellers to Ontario from both the United States and overseas countries were down 84 per cent in 2020 compared to 2019.
- Ontario's hotel industry saw record lows in occupancy and revenue per available room in 2020.
- In 2020, tourism-related employment in Ontario declined by 13 per cent compared to 2019.

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