

KEY TALKING POINTS

This document provides talking points that you can bring up with candidates in the 2021 Federal Election. The first section is applicable to all candidates. The “Talking Points By Party” section provides messaging that is specific to each party. It is important that your message be targeted to the candidate based on their party affiliation, as their platforms are varied in how beneficial they will be for the industry.

Opening Message: Thank you for taking time out of your very busy schedule.

If they are a Liberal candidate: Thank them for the Liberal Campaign Pledge to provide targeted support to the hardest hit businesses and for their support throughout the pandemic.

If they are a member of another party (Conservative, Bloc, NDP, Green or Independent): Thank them for pushing the government to better support the industry and let them know how meaningful targeted supports will be for the industry.

Critical role of hotels in our communities

- Hotels are critical infrastructure in our communities and played an essential role in Canada’s COVID-19 response by serving as a safe place for front line workers to self-isolate, repatriated Canadians to quarantine, and vulnerable citizens to shelter. *(Insert your local hotel’s contributions to your local community)*
- Prior to the pandemic, hotels across Canada employed more than 300,000 people, with total wages estimated at \$10.6 billion. We primarily employ women, visible minorities, young Canadians, and new Canadians – providing them with critical employment opportunities in our community.
- The Canadian hotel sector is a vital part of the Canadian economy, generating revenues of \$21.9 billion in 2018 and contributes \$9.5 billion to governments through taxes.
- The top priority for hotels is the safety of guests, hotel employees and all Canadians. We strongly support the recommendations of the COVID-19 Testing and Screening Expert Advisory Panel for refining testing and screening for land and air border measures.
- Without supports to get our industry through the difficult fall and winter months, our vibrant tourism sector and the anchor businesses like hotels in our community are at risk.
- Without this critical infrastructure:
 - Thousands of employees will lose their jobs.
 - Destinations and communities that rely on tourism are going to be at risk.
 - Canada will not be in a position to attract major group business.
 - The positioning of Canada to attract and host major festivals and cultural events will be hampered.
 - Essential services in our rural and remote regions can’t be provided.

COVID-19 impact on the hotel sector and its employees

- The hotel industry was one of the first industries hit by COVID-19, one of the hardest hit, and it will be the last to recover.
- As you may know, the hotel industry was decimated due to the pandemic, with occupancy levels at single digits during the peak of the pandemic.
(Insert how COVID has personally impacted your business and life, and the employees/constituents in the MP's community)
- Equally catastrophic was the impact this had on our employees, with hotels across Canada reporting a 50-80% reduction in staff through a substantial number of layoffs, resulting in tens of thousands of jobs eliminated.
- While Canadians and most businesses will feel like their lives are returning to normal this summer and fall, the hotel industry will remain in the doldrums. Major events are the pillar of most hotels outside of the summer tourism season.
- We know with certainty that no fully programmed major events are planned for the remainder of 2021 and at this stage, very few in the winter and spring of 2022.
- We know that regular business travel will be slow to return as Canadians and corporations cautiously resume face-to-face business activity. For now, many corporations are planning reduced travel.
- Though national occupancy rates have slightly improved, it is nowhere near the 70% occupancy rate the hotel industry was at in pre-COVID times.
- For our sector, the end of this pandemic will not happen quickly, with the flip of a switch. While most other sectors can bounce back quickly once restrictions are lifted, we cannot. Business travel will take time to pick up. International visitors come mostly in the summer, not the fall or winter. The conferences and events that drive our business in the off-season take months of planning and lead time.
- Our recovery will take longer as continued restrictions on travel and lack of group business persist, and we need government support to bridge business operations through this challenging period.

Talking Points by Party: The urgent need for continued and tailored government support programs

Liberal Party:

- The Liberal Party has pledged to support the hotel industry with a tailored government support program. It is important to thank the candidates from the Liberal party for this program and let them know that this is the right solution to the approaching problem in the fall and winter.
- *Thank you for the targeted bridge program supporting the Hardest Hit Businesses in the Tourism Sector. This will be critical to getting us through the fall and winter seasons.*

Conservative Party:

- The Conservative party has pledged some helpful policies for our sector in their platform and, we suggest that you thank them for these policies, but let them know that they will not be enough. We still need a plan for the hardest hit. It will be critical for a Conservative government to support our sector not just with stimulus, but an enhanced survival fund so that we can get to recovery.
- *Thank you for your support. The 'Explore and Support Canada' as well as the 'Job Surge Plan' may help, but as we cannot yet recover, we need a plan that will help us survive until we can get to recovery. The industry will need a tailored support program for the Hardest Hit to get through the difficult fall and winter months. Can we count on the support of your party for a tailored plan?*

The NDP:

- The NDP has pledged support (though less detailed) for the hard-hit tourism sector and to extend the wage subsidy and fixed cost support until the pandemic is over. It will be important to let them know that a tailored support program will be critical to supporting the economy of your region and keeping workers employed.
- *Thank you for your commitment to extending CEWS and CERS until the pandemic is over. However, if CEWS and CERS are extended at 20% it will not be enough for the industry and to keep our employees. The reality is we have not been able to recover at the same pace as others. This is why we will need a tailored bridge support program to ensure that we make it through the difficult fall and winter months, and into recovery next spring.*

Other Messages: *The urgent need for continued and tailored government support programs*

- The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS) programs have been critical lifelines for our hotel.
- If not for these government support programs over the past 15 months, many hotel properties would already have permanently closed their doors.
- However, the subsidy **is aggressively winding down between July and September**, and only the Liberal Party has pledged to extend it higher than 20%.
- Due to lower tourism activity in the winter months for many hotels, programs like the Liberal's Canada Recovery Hiring Program (CRHP) and the Conservative's Canada Job Surge Plan will not benefit hotels. These programs are inadequate for businesses that are not recovering, because they only provide funding to businesses to hire or rehire staff as business activity recovers.
- According to our June survey of the Coalition of the Hardest Hit Businesses (which represents *the hundreds of businesses in the tourism, travel, arts and culture, events and festivals, motor coach, accommodations and hospitality, and Indigenous tourism sectors*), **nearly 60% of respondents say that without**

sustained access to CEWS and CERS through to the end of 2021, they will be unable to stay in business.

- My business and employees are facing a near-certain financial crisis that will hit us especially hard this fall and winter.
- In order to ensure our survival, continued and tailored support will be necessary for those who need it most.
- **An extension of CEWS and CERS at a subsidy rate of 20% will not be enough. We are asking that all parties that have not already done so commit to a new, tailored wage and fixed cost support program, to be established at the earliest opportunity for Canada's hardest hit businesses to ensure their survival into the fall and winter.**
- If we are allowed to fall victim to the unfortunate timing of the CEWS and CERS withdrawal, staggered travel and tourism reopening, and Canadians' unavoidable urge to exit the country in the cold months, we will see the loss of our vibrant tourism and travel industry and the livelihoods of more than two million people – mostly women, youth and immigrants.

KEY ASK

Canada's hotel industry needs a tailored wage and fixed cost support program to be established at the earliest opportunity with a focus on businesses that are experiencing revenue losses of more than 40 per cent against normal or expected revenues and where survival is an issue.

An extension of CEWS and CERS at a subsidy rate of 20% will not be enough.

Closing Note:

These talking points are a guideline. You can pick and choose the bullets that resonate with you. Speak from the heart and describe your concern for your future. Your job is to get your candidate worried that there is a significant problem here that won't solve itself without more Government investment.