

Trudeau's announcement to aid land border duty free stores

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has made an announcement that will aid the extremely hard-hit duty free stores on the Canada-US border. Trudeau has pledged to provide a bridge program that will help sustain those in Canada's tourism, hospitality, conventions and festival sectors as they continue to endure impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With two high seasons and the seasons between virtually cancelled, and with the ongoing extension of the closed US border, the forecast for the coming eight months is almost as bad as the preceding 18 months, and no one has been harder hit than Canada's land border duty free stores, some of whom have been closed for most of this time, with those open posting sales down more than 95% year on year.

The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy helped the "hardest hit of the hardest hit" businesses get through the first 18 months of the pandemic.

The program announced this morning will help these same businesses to survive normal operations can resume. Our coalition members have been advocating for a bridge program that will only apply to those businesses that are truly hardest hit with a revenue decline of at least 40%.

"The commitment made in this announcement will help to ensure the survival of our industry," said Beth Potter, President and CEO of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada. "Six in ten of our coalition members said they would not survive without this kind of transition support. We have been advocating for a tailored, sector specific support program to ensure that Canada's tourism economy can recover. This program would help get us there."

"Today's announcement affirms the survival of anchor businesses in tourism, hospitality, events, arts and culture sectors, the large majority of which are locally owned small businesses," added Susie Grynol, President and CEO of the Hotel Association of Canada. "The Trudeau government was responsive and innovative partners through the first 18 months of COVID-19, and today's campaign announcement demonstrates the Liberal Party's continued commitment to critical sectors of the Canadian economy that have been deeply imperiled by the pandemic."