Dear Minister,

I am writing as a constituent on behalf of the more than 24,000 Travel Agents in Canada to ask you to take immediate action to provide relief to our industry during these times of crisis.

There are 14,000 large and small Travel Agency businesses in Canada (over 90% are considered small businesses and 75% of Travel Agents are women). Travel Agencies generate over **$30 Billion** in sales and **$3 Billion** in revenue on an annual basis and we are located all across Canada. Our industry has suffered greatly over the past few weeks due to the COVID-19 virus, and we expect that this critical financial situation will continue over the next several months. Due to the virus and its devastating impact on travel, we are experiencing close to zero new revenue coming in, and layoffs and temporary Travel Agency closures have already begun.

Any targeted relief for the travel industry must include Travel Agencies. A scenario where only a few of the largest travel companies receive special financial aid, while the thousands of overwhelmingly small businesses that distribute their travel product are allowed to fail would be unjust. Canadian Travel Agencies are requesting the following support:

**For Businesses:**

1. Inclusion and Prioritization: Ensuring Canadian Travel Agency Businesses and Workers are included and fast-tracked in any Travel and Tourism sector specific financial aid;
2. Provide Zero/low interest Loans or Grants for one to two years;
3. Rental / Real Estate Relief;
4. Tax Relief;
5. Provincial Regulatory Relief: Immediate intervention with Provincial Governments and Regulators to reduce the regulatory burdens.
6. Suspension of Chargebacks**:** Immediate support or intervention with Banks and Credit Card Companies to prevent the catastrophic impact of credit card chargebacks on travel purchases;

**For Workers**:

1. Introduce Emergency Employment Insurance (EI) that waives waiting periods and increases the amount of the benefit from 55% to 75%;
2. Introduce Emergency support for the self-employed (independent contractors) who are not eligible for EI;
3. Provide Emergency financial supports that allow for immediate job share versus unemployment.

I appreciate your leadership during this difficult time. It is vital that the travel industry, including the Travel Agency “voice” be an integral part of the important discussions affecting our industry during this crisis. We urge you to continue to actively communicate with the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA), which speaks on behalf of travel agencies and our customers, Canadian travelers.

Thank you for your support.