



Hon. Carole James  
Minister of Finance  
Province of British Columbia  
Room 153 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

May 31, 2018

**Re: Proposed changes to the Municipal & Regional District Tax**

Dear Minister James,

The Squamish Chamber of Commerce (SCC) is the oldest and largest business organization in the Squamish community. We are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Squamish by actively supporting business, economic growth and diversification. As the voice of business in Squamish, the Chamber represents our membership on a number of business and economic development issues.

The Squamish Chamber membership includes multiple accommodation providers, activity operators and many other businesses, which benefit from tourism in Squamish, either directly or indirectly. We work closely with our community destination marketing organization – Tourism Squamish – to grow the economy in Squamish. We are writing to request that Government not proceed with any proposed changes to the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) as outlined in February's budget.

As you know, tourism is a \$17 billion industry employing 290,000 employees in some 19,000 businesses across the province. In Squamish, 28% of jobs fall within accommodation & food services, arts, entertainment & recreation, and retail; all of which benefit from tourism dollars. This proportion is higher than the Provincial incidence of 22% and doesn't include businesses such as craft breweries, consultants or transportation, which also benefit. [Source: EMSI Analyst, 2017.3 Dataset. 2016 Census]. A key reason for Squamish's success is the partnership between the Province, the commercial accommodation sector, and Tourism Squamish who invests revenues from **MRDT** into sales and marketing initiatives that increase awareness of Squamish and drive visitation to our community, which in turn generates tourism expenditures and creates employment.

That is now all at risk. Any alternate uses for MRDT could seriously hamper Tourism Squamish's ability to attract tourists and execute programs, potentially negatively impacting tourism expenditure and jobs. We understand this is an issue across many jurisdictions in the Province. Last week, the BC Chamber assembly passed a policy resolution to protect funding for tourism marketing and programs. We respectfully request that the Province immediately suspend any implementation of changes to the MRDT. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Walker  
Executive Director, Squamish Chamber of Commerce

Cc: Hon. Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture ([TAC.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:TAC.Minister@gov.bc.ca)), Jordan Sturdy, MLA West Vancouver – Sea to Sky ([jordan.sturdy.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:jordan.sturdy.mla@leg.bc.ca)), Walt Judas, CEO, Tourism Industry Association of BC ([wjudas@tiabc.ca](mailto:wjudas@tiabc.ca)), Val Litwin, CEO, BC Chamber of Commerce ([vlitwin@bcchamber.org](mailto:vlitwin@bcchamber.org)), Pamela Goldsmith-Jones MP West Vancouver – Sea to Sky ([Pam.Goldsmith-Jones.C1A@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Pam.Goldsmith-Jones.C1A@parl.gc.ca))