

October 26, 2017

Premier John Horgan  
[premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)

Honourable Lisa Beare  
Minister of Tourism, Arts & Culture  
[lisa.beare.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:lisa.beare.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

Honourable Jordan Sturdy  
MLA West Vancouver – Sea to Sky  
[jordan.sturdy.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:jordan.sturdy.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

Dear Premier Horgan, Minister Beare and MLA Sturdy,

We understand that the provincial government is reviewing the date of British Columbia's annual Family Day statutory holiday, so wanted to share with you Tourism Whistler's perspective on behalf of our 1,000-plus business members, and almost-6,000 residential members.

The existing date was originally chosen to encourage British Columbia residents to experience and enjoy our beautiful province at a time when B.C. resorts and cities have hotel availability, and activities and attractions can offer special value pricing to welcome local B.C. residents.

In contrast, the third weekend of February falls on U.S. President's Day weekend and Family Day in other Canadian provinces, so as a result many B.C. destinations are sold out or close to sold out – making a local getaway for B.C. residents much more challenging due to lack of availability and higher pricing.

In contrast, Whistler Blackcomb Mountains (downhill skiing) and Whistler Sport Legacies (cross-country skiing, bobsled, luge and skeleton activities) are able to offer special promotions and discounts on the existing Family Day holiday to welcome our B.C. guests, and they are planning the same for 2018. In turn, Tourism Whistler promotes these Family Day offers through our marketing efforts to our regional guests.

Since B.C.'s Family Day holiday was established in 2013, Whistler has seen strong growth in visitation over that weekend, with hotel occupancy growing by 15-points, highlighting the large volume of B.C. residents who have chosen a ski getaway on the existing Family Day weekend. That 15-point occupancy growth (which does not include a large volume of day visitors) equates to thousands of incremental hotel room nights, and additional economic spin off through activities, attractions, events, restaurants, bars, retail shops, and more.

Whistler is but one example, though, as ski resorts, city stays and island getaways across the province have seen similar growth from Family Day, but would not be able to accommodate this same level of visitation a week later, so would lose the existing business that has built up since 2013.

Of note, the tourism industry generated \$15.7 billion in revenue in 2015, with \$2 billion of accommodation room revenue earned in communities collecting the Municipal Regional District Tax. The tourism industry in British Columbia contributed \$1.1 billion in provincial taxes in 2015 and Whistler represents approximately 24% of that.

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In closing, we would like to say that we appreciate and respect the importance of your government listening to the perspectives of all stakeholders, but simultaneously hope you will conclude that keeping this important holiday on the existing day will be a win-win-win, providing greater access and value to local residents, supporting local tourism businesses over two important tourism-based weekends, and boosting B.C.'s economy while generating incremental government taxes.

Thank you for your consideration! We will be supporting the efforts of our local Whistler Chamber of Commerce, as well as the tourism industry associations to which we belong, to engage with your government on this important provincial issue. If you have any questions, though, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Barrett Fisher  
President & CEO  
Tourism Whistler

**Cc: Tourism Whistler Board of Directors**

- Norm Mastalir, GM, Fairmont Whistler, Chair of Board
- Ian Lowe, GM, Crystal Lodge, Vice Chair of Board
- Mayor Nancy Wilhelm-Morden, Resort Municipality of Whistler
- Mike Furey, CAO, Resort Municipality of Whistler
- Pete Sonntag, SVP & COO, Whistler Blackcomb/ Vail Resorts
- Karla Grennon, Director of Marketing, Whistler Blackcomb/ Vail Resorts
- Saad Hasan, GM, Lodging Ovations, Chair of Hotel Association of Whistler
- Roger Soane, President & CEO, Whistler Sport Legacies
- Tony Cary-Barnard, GM, Westin Whistler
- Steve Seattle, GM, Resort Quest Whistler, Wyndham Vacation Rentals
- Jim Allard, Private Owner, Tantalus Lodge

**Whistler Chamber of Commerce**

- CEO, Melissa Pace

**Tourism Industry Association of B.C.**

- CEO, Walt Judas

**Canada West Ski Areas Association**

- President & CEO, Christopher Nicolson