



A message from our President and CEO about COVID-19

### **The time to create solutions is now**

March 30, 2020 – The coronavirus outbreak is having a devastating impact on the tourism industry. In Ontario, tourism market activity in some regions has dropped below 10 per cent of normal March levels. Over half of tourism businesses have already closed their doors and thousands of people have lost or will lose their jobs. For the tourism workers and their families who have been hit the hardest by the outbreak, getting relief and finding new sources of income quickly is critical.

The time to create solutions to support these workers and their families is now.

Since the early days of COVID-19, we have been joining forces with partners and leveraging the Tourism SkillsNet Ontario network to put together a province-wide recovery plan for displaced workers. Tourism SkillsNet Ontario is an alliance of local tourism and employment organizations led by OTEC.

It is important that the solutions we create respond to the immediate needs of workers and have a long-term positive impact on the industry. If we act fast, we can engage and support our workforce when they need it most. We can plan ahead toward recovery and provide pathways back into employment, ensuring we don't come out the other side of this crisis with deeper labour and skills shortages than we did before COVID-19.

Organizations interested in collaborating on a solution to support displaced workers in the tourism industry can connect with us at: [info@otec.org](mailto:info@otec.org). You can also stay tuned for updates via our [website](#) and [social media](#).

As part of our rapid response, we are also working with our community partners to find ways of adjusting our collective programming to better adapt and support the immediate needs of affected tourism workers in Ontario. For businesses and educational partners, we are providing a variety of training opportunities through remote access channels.

History has shown that in times of crisis, our most important resource, the frontline tourism workforce, is the first to be impacted. Our industry is also very often the last to recover from disruption. More than ever, the tourism industry's ability to quickly work together and focus on the needs of the workforce is necessary. Through collaboration, the industry will come out of this pandemic more resilient and better prepared to respond well and quickly in difficult times such as these.

Adam Morrison  
President and CEO  
OTEC