



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
HOTEL ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2025

# ADVOCACY REPORT FOR 2025

Advocacy Priorities and  
Outcomes for BC's  
Accommodation Sector



## **PREPARED BY**

British Columbia Hotel Association

## **WITH SUPPORT FROM**

Counsel Public Affairs



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# Elevating Our Advocacy Approach

As I look back on my first year with the BC Hotel Association, I'm grateful for the trust you have placed in our team and for the candour you have shared along the way. Every conversation, from owners and operators to destination marketing leaders and tourism partners, has shaped how we advocate and how we move forward.

What I have heard throughout the province is clear. Hotels are carrying a growing burden of operational pressures. Insurance, property taxes, salaries, and compliance costs continue to climb, while workforce shortages and an increasingly complex regulatory environment strain day-to-day operations. Add the uncertainty created by recent tariff decisions south of the border, and the need for steady, consistent advocacy becomes even more important.

It is why one of my first priorities was to establish a transparent, long-term government relations strategy. With the support of Counsel Public Affairs, we have deepened our engagement with ministries and decision-makers, particularly the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sport. Their partnership has been instrumental, and with their guidance we are broadening our work.

At the same time, it is essential that our advocacy extends beyond provincial borders. Issues such as immigration, workforce pathways, and cross border economic conditions are shaped at the federal level, and my role on the Hotel Association of Canada board ensures we have a direct line to federal MPs and national decision-makers. These connections give us a stronger platform to advance industry-driven solutions for BC's hospitality community and visitor economies.

The work outlined in this report reflects the insights you continue to share and the challenges you ask us to champion. As the operating environment evolves, the perspectives of hospitality and tourism leaders will remain essential in guiding our efforts.

Our sector is vulnerable, at the same time, resilient, ambitious, and vital to the provincial economy. With focused advocacy and strong partnerships, we can build the conditions that allow hotels and their communities to grow, compete, and thrive.

Thank you for your continued confidence and support — we simply could not do this work without you.

Sincerely,

**Paul Hawes, President & CEO**  
**BC Hotel Association**







# Overview of Activities

BC's accommodation sector and the broader tourism economy are essential drivers of provincial prosperity. Recognizing this, the BCHA continues to take an aggressive, proactive approach to ensure that the challenges facing our industry remain top of mind with decision-makers and the public alike. Our goal is to advance practical, evidence-based policy solutions that promote the long-term sustainability and success of our members.

BCHA achieves this through:

- **Industry-Led Solutions:** Working closely with partner organizations at both the provincial and federal levels to maintain a unified voice on shared priorities and to ensure alignment on key policy issues.
- **Collaboration with Industry Stakeholders:** Fostering respectful, effective relationships with partner organizations and government officials, while maintaining a consistent, trusted presence in media discussions around tourism and hospitality.
- **Alignment with BC Government:** Building strong respectful relationships with key decision makers in the provincial government to advance sector priorities and communicate unintended consequences of policies that have an adverse impact on the accommodation and hospitality sectors.
- **Results-Based Surveys:** Tapping into the on-the ground experiences to get data-driven insights into the state of BC's hotel and tourism sector, creating a credible foundation for our policy recommendations.
- **Policy Alignment:** Developing well-researched, practical solutions that fit within government decision-making frameworks and deliver tangible results for our members.



# Overview of Activities

BCHA continues to meet regularly with provincial ministries to advance sector priorities. In particular, we are developing a strong and collaborative relationship with the Honourable Anne Kang, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. This partnership serves as a launch point for engagement with other key ministries, including:

- Finance
- Emergency Preparedness and Climate Readiness
- Labour
- Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation
- Energy and Climate Solutions
- Housing and Municipal Affairs

These ongoing engagements ensure that the unique needs and perspectives of BC's accommodation sector are reflected in policy development and implementation.

At the federal level, BCHA collaborates closely with the Hotel Association of Canada, strengthening our advocacy on national priorities such as workforce policy, taxation, and short-term rental regulation.

We also maintain active partnerships with industry associations and stakeholders across the province including the Alliance of Beverage Licensees (ABLE BC), Restaurants Canada, the Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC), the BC Destination Marketing Organizations Association (BCDMOA), Destination Vancouver, the BC Business Council, and the Vancouver Board of Trade, and many other industry advocacy groups.

Together, we engage with local governments to raise awareness of the challenges facing the accommodation and tourism sectors and to ensure that municipalities are equipped to advocate effectively on our behalf.

A key component of our advocacy work is education and message alignment. BCHA takes the lead in ensuring that partners share consistent, fact-based messages; that data and research are broadly understood; and that each organization's voice is strategically positioned, knowing when to lead and when to support, to achieve the greatest collective impact.



# Public Affairs by the Numbers

BCHA represents the collective voice of BC's accommodation sector in discussions that shape policy and public understanding. Through policy submissions, government consultations, direct outreach, and media engagement, the association brings sector insight and perspective forward to inform decisions that affect hotels across the province.

**18**

Government  
Interactions

**15**

Letters/Submissions  
to Government

**680**

Pieces of Media  
Coverage

**186m**

Media  
Reach



# Issues and Outcomes

Despite a challenging economic climate, we made significant progress in advancing key issues with government that are critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability of our industry and the BC economy we support. We continue to work tirelessly to ensure these issues remain top of mind with decision makers.



## A. Workforce and Immigration

As a labour shortage continues to undermine the economic viability and operational stability of the accommodations sector, the BC Hotel Association has continued to advocate for having an immigration system that provides for permanent residency for hospitality professionals.

According to the [Canadian Tourism Labour Market](#) snapshot in June, the industry is short 20,000 workers when compared to 2019.

While our industry is facing this pressure, the federal government is reducing the size of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). At its peak in 2023 at 183,590 entrants, the federal government is slashing its intake to 82,000 in 2025 with further reductions to 60,000 next year, dropping to 50,000 in 2027.

In 2024, the Alberta government responded to the issue by expanding the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program (that province's brand for the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)) to include temporary foreign workers employed in the hospitality sector.

If BC adopted a similar approach, it could both alleviate workforce shortages and offer hospitality workers a stable pathway to permanent residency and enhancing long-term labour retention.

Unlike the TFW Program, the PNP provides a pathway to permanent residency, allowing workers to build stable, long-term careers in Canada. This stability benefits employers by improving their ability to attract, train, and retain skilled staff.

For the hospitality sector, greater worker retention reduces turnover costs and enhances service consistency which are key factors in the sector's competitiveness.

# Issues and Outcomes

## B. Cost of Doing Business

The cost of doing business continues to cause significant challenges that threaten the long-term viability of the industry. Increases in property taxes, wage increases, counterproductive sick day policies, increased energy costs, and overall inflation have reduced hotel earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization.

To address these challenges which remain among the most important issues facing our industry, the BCHA remains committed to advocating for solutions and supporting accommodators through member programs that help protect margins and reduce operating costs, among other tangible outcomes. Listed below are several of BCHA's strategic programs aimed at relieving costing pressures.

### **Canadian Hospitality Health Plan**

Affordable, flexible employee benefits designed specifically for hospitality organizations.

### **Hospitality Insurance Program (HIP)**

Tailored insurance coverage with competitive rates for BC accommodators.

### **Canadian Hospitality Pension Program**

Supports long-term financial security for employees through an industry-led, portable pension solution.

### **GreenStep EcoFund**

Helps hotels fund energy, water, and waste reduction projects through a guest-supported eco fee.

### **Foodbuy Canada**

Access bulk purchasing power for food & beverage with major savings and supplier flexibility.

### **Ecolab**

BCHA Corporate Member-only pricing on trusted sanitation and cleaning solutions.

### **SONA Pay**

Lower payment processing fees and simplified transactions, tailored for hospitality.

### **Sherwin-Williams**

Exclusive discounts on high-quality paints and coatings for renovations and refreshes.





# Issues and Outcomes

## C. Global Competitiveness

As competition for international business events increases, the BCHA supported national advocacy efforts focused on the International Convention Attraction Fund (ICAF), a federal program that helps Canada attract major global conferences. These events generate sustained hotel demand, visitor spending, and economic activity in communities across the country.

Since its launch, ICAF has committed \$30.5 million to support 87 international conferences, generating an estimated \$649.8 million in direct economic impact and \$44.8 million in federal tax revenue. This performance significantly exceeded initial projections and demonstrates strong value for public investment.

ICAF has also helped attract conferences in priority sectors such as advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and artificial intelligence, supporting Canada's broader competitiveness objectives while delivering tangible benefits to the accommodation sector.

Despite this track record, ICAF was not included in the federal budget released in November, creating uncertainty about the program's future. In response, the BCHA aligned with the Hotel Association of Canada, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, Meetings Mean Business Canada, and other partners to support coordinated advocacy calling for the fund's renewal.

This advocacy reflects the BCHA's continued focus on strengthening Canada's position in the global business events market and supporting stable, year-round demand for BC's accommodation sector.

**[Read Joint Call to Renew ICAF: Submitted to PM Mark Carney](#)**

# Issues and Outcomes

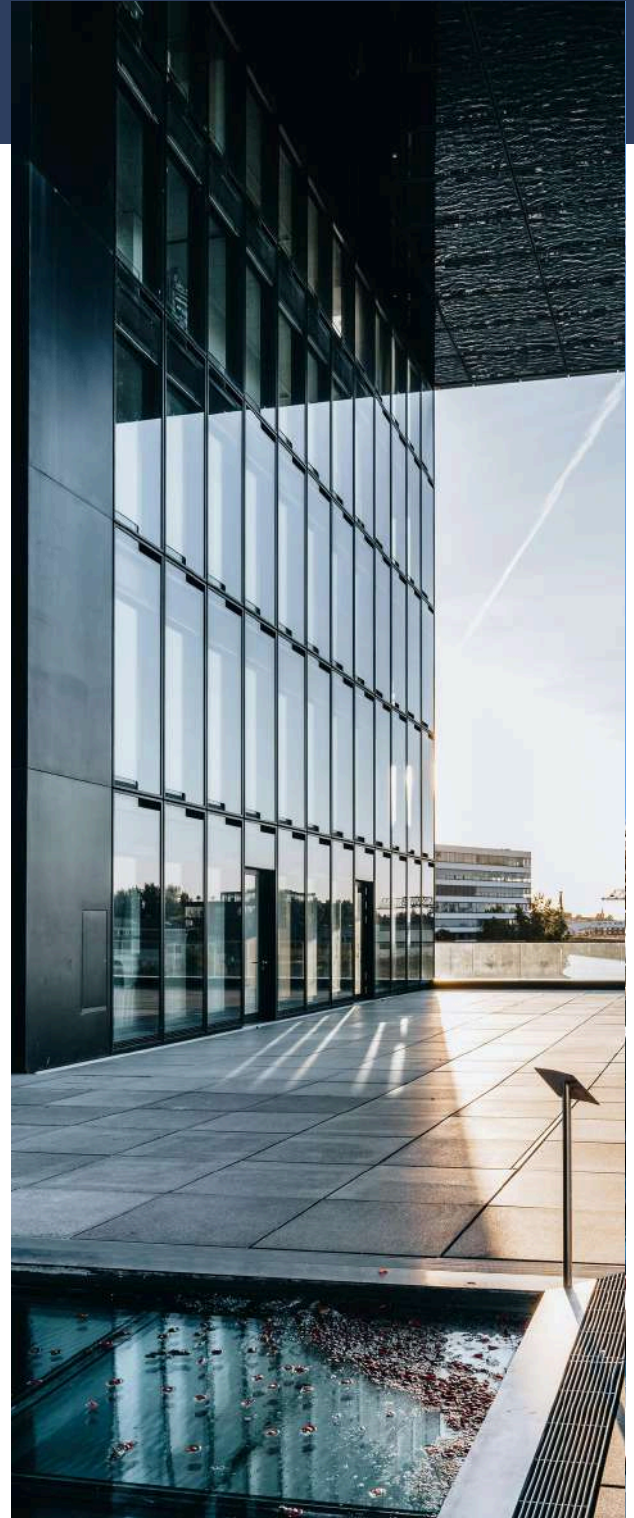
## D. Short-Term Rentals

The BCHA has consistently supported balanced and effective regulation of short-term rentals to protect housing supply and affordability, ensure fairness for licensed accommodation providers, and support workforce stability.

In 2024, the province enacted the Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act, introducing a province-wide principal-residence requirement and a new STR registry, both key measures long advocated by the BCHA. Early results show that listings have declined in some major markets, easing pressure on housing availability, though enforcement and platform accountability remain uneven.

The BCHA is now focused on ensuring the effective implementation of this legislation through:

- Stronger enforcement mechanisms and data-sharing between municipalities, platforms, and the province.
- Continued advocacy to prevent policy rollbacks or exemptions that would weaken the principal-residence rule.
- Linking STR regulation to workforce housing needs, emphasizing that curbing commercial STR activity supports sustainable growth in the hospitality sector.



# Issues and Outcomes

## D. Short-Term Rentals Cont'd

As the legislation is implemented, there has been ongoing public discussion about how STR rules should operate during major events and peak demand periods. Some industry groups, platforms, and elected officials have suggested targeted, temporary flexibility in specific circumstances, including proposals related to international events such as the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

In this context, two private members' bills were introduced in the Legislative Assembly in 2025 that would have adjusted certain elements of the current framework, including temporary permitting for major events and changes to municipal opt-out timelines. These bills will likely not advance, and all signs point to the existing provincial framework remaining in place.

The BCHA continues to engage constructively with all parties and levels of government to ensure that any future policy discussions maintain the integrity of the legislation and do not undermine its core objectives. Consistent enforcement and alignment across jurisdictions remain critical to protecting housing supply, supporting workforce stability, and ensuring a level playing field for BC's licensed accommodation sector.



At the federal level, the Government of Canada began rolling out the Short-Term Rental Enforcement Fund (STREF) to support local and provincial enforcement efforts.

To date, grant agreements have been signed with 18 recipients nationwide, representing \$30.1 million, or approximately 60 percent of the total \$50 million program envelope. Of this funding, \$6.37 million has been allocated to recipients in British Columbia, with disbursements underway and continuing through the 2026–27 fiscal year.

### **Learn more about the STREF Fund:**

<https://housinginfrastructure.canada.ca/housing-logement/stref-farlcd/index-eng.html>



# Issues and Outcomes

## **E. Municipal & Regional District Tax (MRDT)**

The BCHA's position centres on protecting MRDT revenues for tourism-focused purposes and exercising caution around tax increases or revenue diversion that could weaken destination competitiveness or reduce essential marketing funds.

The association stresses the importance of stakeholder consultation, particularly with accommodation providers and tourism operators, when making MRDT decisions, including rate changes, the creation of new designated areas, or any proposals to use MRDT for non-tourism purposes.

With major event pressures approaching such as the 2026 FIFA World Cup and an evolving housing/STR regulatory environment, the BCHA will continue pushing for clear safeguards to ensure MRDT remains tourism-centric and is not diluted by competing policy priorities.



# Issues and Outcomes

## F. Hotel Development

The ongoing contraction of BC's hotel sector continues to constrain the province's economic growth and tourism potential. Vancouver alone will require approximately 10,000 additional hotel rooms by 2050 to meet current and projected visitor demand.

Developing these rooms would generate significant economic and community benefits, such as:

- 5,450 direct hospitality jobs
- Up to 8,000 indirect jobs in retail, services, and events
- \$125 million in additional municipal tax revenue
- \$78 million in provincial tax revenue

In April 2025, the BCHA and Destination Vancouver released the Hotel Community Impact Assessment, which outlined practical, achievable solutions to expand hotel supply. Key recommendations include:

- Deferring or reducing development charges for hotel projects to improve financial feasibility.
- Pre-zoning land for hotel use in transit-oriented and high-opportunity areas to reduce permitting risk and accelerate development timelines.
- Innovative parking and loading solutions (e.g., reduced requirements, shared facilities) to reflect hotel operational realities and reduce costs.
- Encouraging mixed residential-hotel developments to improve project viability by combining multiple uses.



Download the report here:

<https://bcha.com/advocacy/hotel-development-report/>



# Issues and Outcomes

## F. Hotel Development Cont'd

In response to the Hotel Community Impact Assessment, the City of Vancouver made a number of changes to its own policy to encourage hotel development including:

- More flexible zoning for hotel-residential mixed used development
- Allowing additional density for hotel development in high-potential commercial zones.
- Encouraging a broader mix of hotel types
- Exempting certain non-guest-space areas from development charges to reduce cost barriers.
- Exploring regulatory changes to support “pod hotels” and micro-suites.

The work of the task force and the policy changes that resulted from this work are already having a ripple effect throughout the province. The impact assessment report from the Task Force suggests many of its recommendations could apply to other municipalities in BC facing hotel shortages.

Victoria and neighbouring municipalities have now formed a regional working group that brings together community leaders, developers, lenders, and other partners to address hotel supply challenges. In the coming months, the group will review planning policies, development trends, barriers to new projects, opportunities for partnerships with First Nations, and potential incentives or process improvements. Their goal is to support a balanced mix of hotel types that strengthens Greater Victoria's competitiveness, workforce, and visitor economy.

This coordinated approach offers a model for other BC regions, and the BCHA can assist communities in establishing similar groups and advancing this work.





# Issues and Outcomes

## G. Emergency Preparedness

Beginning last spring, the BCHA raised concerns about the provincial government's decision to withdraw funding for B.C.'s Emergency Booking Portal, an essential tool for coordinating accommodation during large-scale evacuations. The platform supported both inventory management and centralized bookings, enabling efficient region-wide coordination. Without it, accommodation providers must manage urgent requests independently, often outside business hours, without a unified system to support evacuees.

In response, BCHA engaged ministers and senior officials, emphasizing that the system had been successfully piloted, was industry-tested, modest in cost, and ready to scale. We also collected member feedback through a sector-wide survey, which showed clear concern: 70 per cent lacked confidence in handling high-volume emergency requests; 92 per cent believed the province should maintain a centralized platform; and 100 per cent expressed no confidence in current government plans. Powerful firsthand accounts from hoteliers further illustrated the operational challenges and underscored the risks faced by evacuees when coordination tools are absent.

Although funding has not yet been reinstated, BCHA's advocacy has strengthened industry alignment, reinforced the case for a provincial solution, and ensured this issue remains on the public record. As B.C. prepares for future wildfire and flood seasons, we will continue urging the province to restore this essential infrastructure and improve emergency preparedness across the province.



# Issues and Outcomes



## H. Accessibility

This year, the BCHA continued to advance its commitment to accessibility through the development of the Hotel Accessibility Playbook, a practical, 15-page resource scheduled to be released in Q1 2026. Designed for hotel operators, the playbook will support a clearer understanding of physical accessibility and provide guidance on making meaningful improvements across properties.

The playbook will offer clear, actionable direction on arrival areas, guestrooms, common spaces, and communication touchpoints, while outlining the regulatory requirements that apply to accommodation providers in B.C.

Being developed in close collaboration with our partners at the Equal Access Collective, the playbook reflects lived experience, inclusive design principles, and hospitality-specific best practices. It will also introduce hands-on support through EAC-led “Walk n Rolls,” offering operators practical insight into how guests navigate their property and where barriers may exist.

Through this work, the BCHA is equipping members with practical tools, training opportunities, and trusted expertise to support more accessible and welcoming hotel environments across the province.



# Issues and Outcomes

## I. Human Trafficking

The BCHA recognizes that human trafficking is a significant and urgent issue. On our “Human Trafficking” resource page, we define the crime as “the trade of humans for forced labour, sexual slavery, or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others.”

The hospitality sector can be vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers due to factors such as anonymity, short-term stays, transient guests, among other intricacies. The BCHA believes the hotel industry, working alongside partners and stakeholders, has a critical role to play in reducing and ultimately eliminating human trafficking.

To support this goal, the BCHA provides members with training and resources to recognize red flags, respond appropriately, and implement effective risk-management practices. In particular, it promotes the free online training program “[Not In Our Hotel](#),” which equips hotel teams to recognize, respond to, and report suspected human trafficking.

The BCHA has partnered with other provincial hotel associations in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan to offer this training to raise human-trafficking awareness across Canada’s accommodation sector.





# Wins at a Glance

1

## Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act Preserved

The government is facing external pressure from short-term rental companies to relax legislation restricting use of STR.

At the BC NDP convention in November, delegates passed the following resolution

- The BC NDP will support the government's actions to restrict short-term rentals
- The BC NDP will call on the provincial government to raise fines for short-term rental violators and non-compliant platforms to ensure strong enforcement and real accountability.

### Key Gains

BC NDP delegates sent a clear message that they want the government to strengthen STR rules, not relax them.

### Provincial Ripple

This resolution provides pressure on the BC Government to strengthen rules restricting STR at a time when online short term booking platforms are ramping up their campaigns to relax provisions in the legislation.

2

## Vancouver Modernizes Hotel Development Policy

As the gateway to British Columbia, Vancouver has adopted new policies that make it easier and more feasible to build hotel rooms — unlocking growth for the entire province.

### Key Gains

- Flexible zoning for hotel-residential projects
- Added density in high-opportunity areas
- Lower development charges
- Support for diverse hotel types, including micro-suites and pod hotels

### Why It Matters

Vancouver needs 10,000 new rooms by 2050. These policy changes clear the way for more supply, more jobs, and stronger visitor capacity that benefits every region of BC.

### Provincial Ripple

This leadership is already inspiring other destinations, with Victoria advancing its own task force to increase hotel supply.

# Outlook for 2026

In 2026, BCHA will continue to deliver on a revitalized government relations strategy that aligns our advocacy priorities with the province’s economic and tourism objectives. Our focus will be on protecting jobs, reducing business costs, and strengthening the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of BC’s accommodation sector. We will be laser focused in implementing a revitalized government relations strategy focused on four key goals.

Workforce Development	BCHA will advocate for expanded access to the Provincial Nominee Program and for clearer pathways to permanent residency for hospitality workers. Stabilizing the hospitality workforce remains essential to protecting thousands of BC jobs and ensuring hotels can meet growing visitor demand, even as U.S. economic volatility and demographic pressures affect cross-border travel and labour supply.
Cost of Business Mitigation	We will continue to advance policies that directly reduce or offset the rising cost of doing business in the hotel sector including property taxation, utilities, insurance, and carbon-related costs while opposing measures that increase costs without improving productivity, competitiveness, or sustainability.
Regulatory Reform and Compliance	BCHA will work with government to ensure fair, transparent, and timely implementation of short-term rental and strata hotel regulations. Achieving clear, practical rules will reduce compliance costs, support market stability, and protect affordable visitor accommodation across key tourism regions.
Strategic Tourism and Infrastructure Investment	We will champion greater investment in strategic tourism assets, such as meeting facilities, sports venues, and cultural attractions, while advocating for expanded support for critical infrastructure, including transportation, housing, and workforce housing, that underpin the visitor economy.

BCHA’s overarching goal for 2026 is to position the accommodation sector as an essential partner in BC’s economic growth strategy: resilient, competitive, and equipped to meet the demands of a changing tourism landscape.



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Gareth Allen-Symmons, Communications Manager, British Columbia Hotel Association

Hotel Association of Canada  
Association of Beverage Licensees (ABLE BC)  
Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia  
Tourism Industry Association of Canada  
Tourism Nanaimo  
Tourism Kamloops  
Vancouver's North Shore Tourism Association  
Tourism Revelstoke  
Tourism Golden  
Richmond Hotel & Destination Association  
Tourism Richmond  
Destination Greater Victoria  
Hotel Association of Vancouver  
Vancouver Hotel Destination Association  
Counsel Public Affairs



# QUESTIONS? CONTACT US.



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