



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Tourism Prince Rupert, Prince Rupert Chamber, and City's Economic Development Office
Create Small Business Recovery Task Force**

Prince Rupert, May 11th, 2020 – The Prince Rupert and District Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Prince Rupert, and the City of Prince Rupert's Economic Development Office are pleased to announce their partnership on a Small Business Recovery Task Force. Over the past two months, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many local businesses in Prince Rupert to close their doors or shift operations to allow for no-contact service. These measures have severely impacted our local small business economy, and many local businesses will require additional support over the coming months as we move into recovery. As BC begins a phased reopening of the economy in May, there will be many questions and additional support measures needed to help Prince Rupert's small business and tourism sectors weather the storm.

The purpose of the Small Business Recovery Task Force is to work collaboratively and efficiently to advocate for relief and find solutions to support our local stakeholders. Meeting weekly, representatives from Tourism Prince Rupert, the Prince Rupert & District Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Prince Rupert's Economic Development Office are able to share concerns and feedback from each sector and develop shared action items to address with the relevant levels of government or local business.

The Small Business Recovery Task Force has already been hard at work advocating for specific relief measures communicated by local stakeholders. To support recovery efforts, the City of Prince Rupert has announced it would be waiving the \$350 fee for restaurants to open sidewalk patios this summer, in order to allow for more tables spaced out to meet social distancing requirements. This request was brought forward by the Task Force after communication with local restaurant owners. On the tourism side, the City of Prince Rupert has also agreed to offer a complete refund for all seasonal charter fishing business licenses, for those operators who elect not to operate this season. This request was also brought forward by Tourism Prince Rupert after discussion with local charter fishing operators and discussed via

the Small Business Recovery Task Force. Work will continue to advocate for additional relief measures such as those described above, as well as to develop additional marketing and small business support initiatives locally.

“The tourism sector has been, and will continue to be, severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism Prince Rupert has been working hard to advocate for tourism-specific relief, through engagement with our local tourism businesses and collaboration with local partners. Our participation in the Small Business Recovery Task Force allows us to work more closely with both the Chamber and the City to ensure that we are advocating for and developing support programs that will help the greatest number of businesses.”

- Ceilidh Marlow, Executive Director, Tourism Prince Rupert

“Our local small businesses have indeed felt the sudden impact of COVID 19. While some were able to respond and adapt, many more were not, and this crisis is not over. The PR&DCC is committed to leading local business efforts to provide support as we begin ramping up our economic recovery with urgency, safety, and collaboration in mind. The Small Business Recovery Task Force partnership with PR&DCC, TPR, and the City of PR further serves to underscore the necessity of a consolidated effort to maximize recovery and to build resiliency into our future. As part of our new normal, working together as one united voice for the sake of our local business economy is imperative.”

- Michelle Boomars-MacNeill, President, Prince Rupert & District Chamber of Commerce

“The City understands that now more than ever we need to work with local partners to support our small business community through these challenging times. The pandemic has taught us that we are stronger together, which is why we are combining efforts with the Chamber and Tourism Prince Rupert to listen to and address small business concerns.”

- Paul Vendittelli, Manager of Transportation and Economic Development, City of Prince Rupert

To bring any concerns or ideas to the Small Business Recovery Task Force, please see the relevant contact information for each organization below.

If you would like specific information regarding the City’s patio bylaw and/or seasonal business license refund program, please contact Paul Vendittelli via the contact information listed below.

Small Business Recovery Task Force Contacts

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