



Marc G. Serré
Member of Parliament / Député
Nickel Belt

Press Release
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Federal Investment Strengthens Indigenous Tourism and Local Economies

NICKEL BELT – GREATER SUDBURY – Member of Parliament, Marc G. Serré, is pleased to announce a \$1 million federal investment through the ITF-SITES program for the Wiikwemikong Development Commission. This funding will support the expansion of Wiikwemikong’s campground, adding 26 new sites to the 12 that opened in 2024. This expansion is part of a broader effort to establish Wiikwemikong as an Indigenous tourism destination, generating benefits for the local economy. The investment will contribute to economic growth by attracting more visitors creating new job opportunities and boosting local businesses.

The Government of Canada is working with Indigenous organizations to support Indigenous-led tourism initiatives through the Indigenous Tourism Fund (ITF). In partnership with the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA), \$10 million has been allocated to projects that develop and enhance Indigenous tourism experiences. This funding is part of the Signature Indigenous Tourism Experiences Stream (SITES), which focuses on showcasing cultural heritage and traditions.

According to Indigenous Tourism Ontario, Northern Ontario's tourism sector is experiencing a strong post pandemic recovery, fueled by growing demand for Indigenous-led experiences, cultural and eco-tourism. The industry contributes over \$622 million annually to Ontario’s GDP and supports more than 12,000 jobs. On Manitoulin Island, seasonal tourism has increased by 30 per cent, with visitors spending an average of \$260 per trip, primarily on accommodations, outdoor activities, and cultural experiences.

Quotes

“The projects highlighted today showcase the collaboration between the government and Indigenous communities. By working together to uplift Indigenous businesses, we can create local economic opportunities and advance reconciliation. Indigenous tourism can attract high numbers of international tourists who seek unique cultural experiences and can confirm Canada’s place as a top global destination. I look forward to seeing the difference this program will make in communities across the country.” – **The Honourable Pascale St-Onge, Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec**

“Indigenous tourism is a vital bridge between economic growth and cultural preservation. With our continued collaboration with Indigenous communities, financial institutions, and key partners, we are supporting tourism ventures that empower our communities to share their stories while building sustainable futures and enhancing community prosperity.” – **Shannin**



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Metatawabin, ICD.D, Chief Executive Officer, National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association

“By adding 26 new campsites, we are boosting tourism and showcasing the natural beauty of Wiikwemikong Unceded Territory and the surrounding area. This initiative is expected to drive local economic growth, create new jobs, and provide long-term benefits for the community. Congratulations to Ogimaa Tim Ominika and Wiikwemikong Development Commission for their vision and leadership in bringing this project to life.” – **Marc G. Serré, MP Nickel Belt and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources**

Quick Facts

- According to the Conference Board of Canada, the Indigenous tourism sector in Canada generated an estimated \$3.7 billion in revenue in 2023, directly contributed \$1.6 billion to Canada’s gross domestic product, and supported approximately 34,700 jobs across the country.
- The Indigenous tourism industry provides economic opportunities for women: 36% of Indigenous tourism businesses are owned by women.
- SITES is one stream of the broader Indigenous Tourism Fund, which dedicates \$20 million to aid the industry’s recovery from the pandemic and foster sustainable growth. The other stream is the Micro and Small Business Stream, which enhances micro and small Indigenous tourism businesses' level of market readiness.

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