

**Ministry of Heritage,
Sport, Tourism and
Culture Industries**

Minister

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**Ministère des Industries du
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January 24, 2022

The Honourable Bob Runciman
Chair
St. Lawrence Parks Commission
R.R. #1
Morrisburg, ON K0C 1X0

2022-23 Mandate Letter

Dear Mr. Runciman:

Thank you for your continuing leadership as Chair of the Board of Commissioners of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. Your team's work contributes to a spectacular double bottom line in Ontario, reflecting our rich cultural fabric and contributing to our economic success.

I often say Ontario offers the world in one province. The St. Lawrence Parks Commission is a world-class tourism experience, making our jobs in the ministry – showcasing Ontario and attracting visitors – easier. The important work you are doing provides truly unique opportunities for residents and visitors to explore and discover.

I recognize that St. Lawrence Parks Commission has undertaken meaningful stakeholder engagement with local municipalities on your new long-term strategic plan. Please continue to work with partners to meet the needs of communities and fulfil your mandate.

As you develop your business objectives, performance goals and other activities for the coming year, I ask that you consider a number of key government priorities.

The heritage, sport, tourism and culture sectors were the first hit by the triple threat of health, economic and social crises posed by COVID-19, and there has been an unprecedented and devastating impact on the ministry's agencies and their operations. Together, we've worked to protect and support our sectors. We've reinforced the work of the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee and spotlighted our sectors' challenges at the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Our joint efforts will help inform the next phase of the government's plan to responsibly restart the economy.

In December 2020, my ministry released *Reconnecting Ontarians: Re-emerging as a Global Leader*, a white paper that discusses medium- and long-term strategies for the recovery of the heritage, sport, tourism and culture industries. After releasing the white

paper, we arranged roundtable sessions with you and your agency's CEO in April and October 2021 to discuss collaborative, agency-led initiatives in support of recovery. I appreciated hearing about your successes and plans, and exploring opportunities to further work with your fellow agencies and attractions.

I also established a Tourism Economic Recovery Ministerial Task Force to provide actionable guidance on the strategies, tactics and approaches the government should consider when supporting the tourism industry's economic recovery in Ontario. We need to be, and we will be, ready to welcome the world back to our province.

As part of the government of Ontario, please work with your agency's CEO to act in the best interests of Ontarians by being efficient, effective, and providing value for money to taxpayers. Our government's primary focus is to protect every life and every job we possibly can. Without healthy people, we cannot have a healthy economy. As the Chair of a provincial agency, you and the Board of Directors of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission are responsible for setting the goals, objectives, and strategic direction of the agency within its mandate; while the agency's CEO is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the agency, including its financial, analytical, and administrative affairs as well as the leadership and management of its human resources. This includes:

1. Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management

- operating within your agency's financial allocations
- identifying and pursuing opportunities for revenue generation, innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability
- complying with applicable direction related to supply chain centralization and Realty Interim Measures for agency office space
- leveraging and meeting benchmarked outcomes for compensation strategies and directives
- working with the ministry, where appropriate, to advance the *Ontario Onwards Action Plan*

2. Transparency and Accountability

- abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting
- adhering to requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, accounting standards and practices, and the *Public Service of Ontario Act* ethical framework, and responding to audit findings, where applicable
- identifying appropriate skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively support the board's role in agency governance and accountability

3. Risk Management

- developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks, including planning for and responding to health and other emergency situations, including but not limited to COVID-19
- developing a continuity of operations plan that identifies time critical/essential services and personnel

4. Workforce Management

- optimizing your organizational capacity to support the best possible public service delivery

- modernizing and redeploying resources to priority areas when or where they are needed

5. **Data Collection**

- improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information-sharing and reporting, including by leveraging available or new data solutions to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery
- supporting transparency and privacy requirements of data work and data sharing with the ministry, as appropriate

6. **Digital Delivery and Customer Service**

- exploring and implementing digitization or digital modernization strategies for online service delivery and continuing to meet and exceed customer service standards through transition
- adopting digital approaches, such as user research, agile development and product management

7. **Diversity and Inclusion**

- developing and encouraging diversity and inclusion initiatives promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace
- demonstrating leadership of an inclusive environment free of harassment
- adopting an inclusion engagement process to ensure all voices are heard to inform policies and decision-making

8. **COVID-19 Recovery**

- identifying and pursuing service delivery methods (digital or other) that have evolved since the start of COVID-19
- supporting the recovery efforts from COVID-19

I also ask that your agency's staff work with my ministry to ensure your objectives and business model are aligned with your mandate and government priorities. Please continue to preserve and safely showcase St. Lawrence Parks Commission's unique and rich tourism and heritage assets to visitors, driving tourism and generating local jobs and economic growth for the communities of Eastern Ontario. Please continue to identify revenue generating opportunities to support the quality and sustainability of your operations, such as off-season events at Fort Henry and Upper Canada Village, and enhanced retail offerings at the parks. I also encourage you to work in collaboration with your partners; your Regional Tourism Organization; your fellow ministry agencies and attractions; and other Government of Ontario agencies and ministries, where appropriate.

The government is continuing its Red Tape and Regulatory Burden Reduction initiative to reduce the cost of complying with regulations and reduce the number of regulatory compliance requirements, including red tape, on Ontario businesses. This aligns with my request at the roundtable sessions with you and your agency's CEO earlier last year, to submit suggestions for legislative and regulatory changes that could help to reduce burdens on your agency's operations. Staff from my ministry may reach out to you to support these initiatives.

I value your role in operating and managing parks, recreational facilities, shops, restaurants, camp sites and other facilities necessary for the proper operation and

maintenance of the parks. I ask that you ensure your agency continues delivering this important work in a manner consistent with government priorities. Please continue to keep my ministry informed of key activities and initiatives, as described in your Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In particular, please ensure staff from the ministry are made aware of all planned events or issues, including contentious matters, public communication strategies and publications, and stakeholder and other public consultations and discussions. I also ask that you continue to keep my ministry informed of your agency's recovery planning efforts as you implement strategies to sustain operations. As we move forward, it will be important to continue to work closely together, including taking a coordinated approach to communications, so that when it is safe to welcome the world back to our province, we are ready.

In this regard, I ask that you and your Board keep the following in mind:

- I recognize that the St. Lawrence Parks Commission is continued by the *St. Lawrence Parks Commission Act*, and its Commissioners have considerable powers to develop, control, manage, operate and maintain the Parks for which it is responsible.
- The St. Lawrence Parks Commission is not, however, autonomous of government:
 - The Commission is funded by the Government of Ontario out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and the appropriation is subject to adjustment by me as Minister, central agencies or the Legislative Assembly itself.
 - The Lieutenant Governor in Council appoints the Commissioners, and designates the Chair and Vice-Chair.
 - The Act empowers me, as Minister, to make grants and loans to the Commission.
 - The Minister of Finance may direct that any surplus funds held by the Commission be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund.
 - The Commission's annual operating and capital budget is subject to approval or variance by Treasury Board.
 - Certain powers of the Commission can only be exercised with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.
 - The Commission's regulatory powers are subject to Lieutenant Governor in Council approval.
 - The St. Lawrence Parks Commission must adhere to the above-mentioned Agencies and Appointments Directive, which makes repeated reference to accountability: The accountability of an agency board (through its chair) to a minister; the accountability of the agency itself to the government through its minister; a minister's accountability, which cannot be delegated, for each provincial agency; the requirement for an MOU which reflects the accountability framework; and the minister's accountability to Cabinet and the Legislature, representing the public. Transparency is key, to the public,

and between myself and yourself on behalf of the Board.

- The MOU, which you and I signed last year, whose purpose includes establishing the accountability relationships between myself as Minister and yourself on behalf of the Commission. These include:
 - The Board of Commissioners acknowledges that it is accountable, through myself as Minister, to the Legislative Assembly in exercising its mandate. Accountability is a fundamental principle to be observed in the management, administration and operations of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. The Board of Commissioners acknowledges that it is responsible to me, through you, for governance and oversight of the Commission.
 - The Commission and my ministry have a duty to work together in a mutually respectful manner. We agree to avoid duplication of services wherever possible.
- In addition to accountabilities, the MOU also addresses responsibilities, including:
 - My responsibility to report and respond to the Legislature on the affairs of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission.
 - When appropriate or necessary, my responsibility to take action or direct that the Commission take corrective action with respect to its administration or operations.
 - Keeping you informed of the government's priorities and broad policy directions for the Commission.
 - Through this letter, my responsibility to outline the high-level expectations, key commitments and performance priorities for the St. Lawrence Parks Commission.
 - My responsibility to recommend to central agencies any provincial funding to be allocated to the Commission.
 - Your responsibility to seek strategic policy direction from me for the Commission.
 - Your responsibility to ensure timely communications with me regarding any issues or events that may concern or can reasonably be expected to concern me.
 - Your responsibility to provide me with the Commission's annual business plan, for my approval as Minister.
- The MOU also confirms that both you and I recognize that the timely exchange of information on the operations and administration of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission is essential for me to meet my responsibilities for reporting and responding to the Legislative Assembly on the affairs of the Commission.

- The foregoing are just some examples of MOU accountabilities and responsibilities. I recommend that your CEO and every Commissioner review the MOU in its entirety on a regular basis.

As the world emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and global travel restrictions continue to ease, Ontario needs to ensure it is ready to compete within Canada and worldwide by driving economic development through strong recovery of the heritage, sport, tourism and culture sectors. Working together, our efforts have the potential to, once again, drive billions of dollars in economic activity and create thousands of jobs. Our work supports that incredible double bottom line – strong economic growth and a resilient cultural fabric that reflects the diversity and strength of Ontario’s communities. As Minister responsible for this important suite of industries, I recognize there is a lot of work ahead of us to get our economy moving again and to make sure Ontario remains an economic powerhouse.

I know that with the St. Lawrence Parks Commission’s help, we will succeed.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa".

Lisa MacLeod
Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

c: Hollee Kew, General Manager and CEO, St. Lawrence Parks Commission
Sarah Harrison, Deputy Minister, Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Sarah McQuarrie, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agency Relations and Accountability
Division, Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries