



Submission to Finance Canada's Pre-Budget Consultation
in Advance of the 2023 Budget

**RECREATION VEHICLE DEALERS
ASSOCIATION**

February 2023



Overview of Budget Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Due to the geographic constraints of the existing programs, **the Government of Canada should create an Apprenticeship Travel Grant** that could be used by those who are required to travel to undertake an apprenticeship training program. This Grant should be targeted towards those enrolled in programs that are not offered in their city, town or province.

Recommendation 2: The labour mobility tax grant of up to \$4000 per year to support temporary relocation within Canada by Skilled Trades People should be made available for those that are temporarily relocating to pursue their apprenticeship training and Red Seal certification. **The requirements need to be changed so that skilled workers, who are looking to obtain the necessary qualifications to join a specific niche of the work force, are covered and supported.**

Recommendation 3: Support and accompany provincial apprenticeship branches, in all parts of Canada, who are looking to offer of the Red Seal Program certification.

Recommendation 4: As RVing is a large component of tourism, both internationally and domestically, investment in camping and RVing infrastructure will play a crucial role in the overall contributions of the tourism industry. This will lead to future economic development and prosperity post-COVID-19. Upgrades in infrastructure are essential if we want to be able to ensure the future of this industry and make it more accessible to all Canadians.

Recommendation 5: Make a public and significant commitment to the electrification of campgrounds across Canada. Better access to electricity for RV drivers is an important driver of tourism and will contribute immediately to the transition towards electric recreation vehicles and zero-emissions campgrounds.

Recommendation 6: Empower regional communities that are seeking to create, update or modernize camping and RV infrastructures. If smaller communities see investing in tourism as a great way for them to grow their local economy, the government needs to accompany them in such endeavour.

Recommendation 7: The government must continue to provide financial supports and look for new ways to break up the bottleneck of supply issues and must ensure the border does not close again.

Recommendation 8: The proposed **\$1.9 billion for the National Trade Corridor Fund** to make Canada's transportation infrastructure more efficient and effective. This will make resources more readily available to private transportation and trucking companies so that they can better adapt to new technologies, while increasing the flow of goods in and out of Canada.



Introduction to RVDA

The Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association (RVDA) of Canada is a national, volunteer federation of provincial and regional RVDA associations and their members who have united to form a professional trade association for all businesses involved in the recreation vehicle industry. The core objective of the RVDA of Canada is to bring together and represent the retail businesses involved in the recreation vehicle industry across Canada, thus providing the support and strength to protect and promote the interests and welfare of Canadian RV Dealers, and to maximize the potential of the industry for all involved.

RVing in Canada also has a considerable impact on the Canadian economy. The manufacturing, purchasing, servicing, and use of recreation vehicles contribute billions – both directly and indirectly – to the Canadian economy each year. For example, before the pandemic in 2019, the RV industry supported 67,200 jobs and there was \$6.2 billion in total spending, which generated over \$4.8 billion in added value to the Canadian economy. There are over 4,231 campgrounds operated across Canada, each offering a unique experience for Canadians and international visitors.

In part due to the international travel restrictions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, the increased interest from Canadians towards recreation vehicles has positioned RVDA as a major actor and important voice for the tourism industry. We believe the revigorated passion from Canadians towards outdoor and camping activities is proof of the great potential of our industry, but it also has highlighted issues that need to be fixed through efficient collaboration between RVDA, its members and the multiple levels of government.

The implementation of the RVDA's recommendations in this document will contribute significantly to the RV industry's ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure the continued success of the RV and camping industry in Canada. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the RV sector and to facilitate growth, we recommend that the federal government introduces a plan to support the much-needed skilled workers in our industry and in Canada as a whole. This plan should start with allowing future workers seeking their Red Seal designation to benefit from the \$4000 Mobility Grant.

As an industry, we understand that there are significant investments that are required towards long-term sustainability. We encourage our federal partners to make strategic invests in improving and modernizing the infrastructure supporting camping and tourism businesses. Accessibility and basic servicing is what drives Canadians and RV owners to explore the most unique and pristine locations all around the country. It is imperative that the government increases the level of support towards building the foundations needed for a thriving, sustainable and innovative recreational vehicle industry.



2023 Budget Recommendations

Increasing Support for Skilled Workers

One of the chokepoints of the Canadian economy is the severe lack of skilled workers and tradespeople. This is especially true for the RV industry, where technicians have a central role in servicing and repairing complex vehicles. The Canadian demographic portrait is also changing quickly. The majority of RV technicians are in the second half of their careers and business are struggling to find young, motivated and trained employees.

Out of the currently 1020 full-time RV service technicians throughout Canada, only 424 have obtained their Red Seal Designation. There are currently only two programs in Canada that offer RV service technician apprenticeship training, both of which are located in our western most provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. Each of these programs provide Red Seal Designation that is accepted nation-wide. The existing educational programs quickly reach full-enrollment each year, leaving dozens of additional students on waiting lists for a spot in the respective programs.

Training programs are offered in other provinces but they are not accepted as full apprenticeship programs. As a result, few RV service technicians who actually work in the industry are classified as apprentices. We applaud the government for the focus on skills and training in previous years budgets. Measures such as the Canada Training Benefit, more funding for Skills Canada and the new apprenticeship strategy will help Canadians get the skills they need. We look forward to continuing to work in close partnership with the government to increase support for the skilled workers in the RV industry.

Recommendation:

- Due to the geographic constraints of the existing programs, the Government of Canada should create an Apprenticeship Travel Grant that could be used by those who are required to travel to undertake an apprenticeship training program. This Grant should be targeted towards those enrolled in programs that are not offered in their city, town or province.
- The labour mobility tax grant of up to \$4000 per year to support temporary relocation within Canada by Skilled Trades People should be made available for those that are temporality relocating to pursue their apprenticeship training and Red Seal certification. The requirements need to be changed so that skilled workers, who are looking to obtain the necessary qualifications to join a specific niche of the work force, are covered and supported.



Supporting our National Parks and Tourism Sector

The Government of Canada should provide targeted and dedicated investment in camping and RV infrastructure throughout Canada's system of National Parks. Boasting 119 Federal campgrounds, Canada's National Parks are some of the most beautiful in the world. Despite this, approximately 75% of campsites do not have required services to support RVs. As campground services continue to rise in demand, critical infrastructure is needed, such as sizing requirements to accommodate larger RVs and access to appropriate electrical outlets and waste disposal facilities. An upgraded national park infrastructure is a direct driver of growth in recreation vehicle activities. Increased RV interest across Canada would result in a more vibrant tourism industry, more jobs and more social media exposure for rural regions of the country. Travelling with a recreation vehicle is a unique and accessible way to explore the most remote places of Canada. Canadian travellers should not have to remove locations from their bucket lists because of a lack of infrastructure.

Investing in campground infrastructure and modernizing services will also help incentivise tourism and bring more Canadians into the great outdoors. Tourism is one of the most natural ways of kickstarting the regional economic development of smaller communities across Canada. Restaurants, boutiques and travel focused small-businesses all thrive supported by reliable modern infrastructure. This is not only a necessity for the recreation vehicle industry but should be perceived by officials as a critical component of regional economic growth. These new investments will also spur greater electrification, not only in Canadian campgrounds, but would also assist the RV industry's efforts in promoting the electrification of new models of RVs.

Recommendation:

- As RVing is a large component of tourism, investment in camping and RVing infrastructure will play a crucial role in the overall contributions of the tourism industry to future economic development and prosperity throughout Canada. This will not only spur growth from a domestic audience, but provide greater incentive from international visitors. Upgrades in infrastructure are essential if we want to be able to ensure the future of this industry and make it more accessible to all Canadians.
- Make a public and significant commitment to the electrification of campgrounds across Canada. Better access to electricity for RV drivers is an important driver of tourism and will contribute immediately to the transition towards electric recreational vehicles and zero-emissions campgrounds.
- Empower regional communities that are seeking to create, update or modernize camping and RV infrastructures. If smaller communities see investing in tourism as a great way for them to grow their local economy, the government needs to accompany them in such endeavour.



Resolving Supply Chain Bottlenecks

Trade is the lifeblood of the Canadian economy and to that of the RV Industry. Similar to many businesses across Canada, RV dealers continue to face supply chain constraints which limits our ability to fully operate. Faced with transportation bottlenecks and the sourcing key materials, this has led to production slowdowns. The results of which are being felt by many dealers as they face delayed or cancelled sales.

Coupled with higher inflation, rising interest rates, and continued supply chain disruptions, our industry is anticipating a challenging road ahead. These lingering economic issues are estimated to be larger, broader and more persistent than initially anticipated and will continue to weigh on the growth as the year continues. In an effort to help with these challenges, the government of Canada needs to respond by supporting both in the short-term and long-term infrastructure needs.

Recommendation:

- The government must continue to provide financial supports and look for new ways to break up the bottleneck of supply chain issues by supporting frictionless trade. Ensuring a steady flow of parts and equipment through open borders will remain essential.
- The proposed **\$1.9 billion for the National Trade Corridor Fund** to make Canada's transportation infrastructure more efficient and effective. This will make resources more readily available to private transportation and trucking companies so that they can better adapt to new technologies, while increasing the flow of goods in and out of Canada.