

## **Resolution 2A**

### **ESTABLISH ALTERNATE TOURISM INDICATOR COLLECTION PROCEDURE (PASSED)**

⇒ Town of Yarmouth

**WHEREAS** municipalities should encourage the Nova Scotia government to provide Nova Scotians with the most accurate tourism numbers possible; and

**WHEREAS** the current method of reporting tourist traffic used by the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency and the Nova Scotia government is based on rooms sold by the hospitality industry; and

**WHEREAS** these numbers do not distinguish between actual tourists and people visiting a community for business, medical and family reasons; and

**WHEREAS** given the tendency for tourism visitors to stay with friends and family, the current tourism numbers do not reflect this group; and

**WHEREAS** this group of tourists make a significant financial contribution to the communities they visit; and

**WHEREAS** it is conceivable that some inaccuracy exists in the use of these numbers and may provide data that may not be as accurate as it should;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the UNSM ask the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism to establish an alternative tourism indicator collection procedure, in a timely fashion, other than one that is based on accommodation room nights being purchased by visitors.

Response from:

*Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism*

### **RESPONSE:**

*Thank you for the opportunity to respond to UNSM Resolution 2A: Establish Alternate Tourism Indicator Collection Procedure. The Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism (ERDT) in concert with the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency (NSTA) publishes a number of different tourism indicators on a monthly basis on the NSTA website (<http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/current-tourism-activity>) and we welcome feedback from industry and others on those indicators.*

*There are three main groups of tourism indicators produced monthly: indicators based on accommodation activity; tourism visitation (number of overnight visitors to the province); and visitor activity indicators (museum and gallery attendance, green fee rounds, visitor information centre activity, etc.). It is the combination of these indicators which allows for a fuller picture of the tourism industry. On a periodic basis, ERDT/NSTA undertakes an extensive Visitor Exit Survey to provide more detailed information on the reasons for a travellers' visit, party composition and size, where visitation occurred, expenditures, etc. These data provide additional understanding of the industry and forms part of the methodology for the visitor estimation process.*

*As part of their licensing requirements, accommodations provide information to ERDT/NSTA on the number of room nights sold. We do ask for and receive information from many operators regarding reason for accommodation sales. Room night sales and occupancy rates are able to be reported on a tourist region basis and provide a proxy for regional tourism activity. The data is extremely robust and provides valuable information at the community level that is critical for operator's business planning.*

*Our visitation estimates of overnight visits are based on counting non-residents as they enter Nova Scotia by road/ferry or leave by air and includes those who stay with family and friends. We do collect data from these visitors in our visitor exit survey which is completed about every five years. Collecting detailed information annually on trip purpose would be extremely costly and historically, visitors' trip purpose does not change substantially even over a five year period. From our research we understand that only a small portion of visitors 'only' stay with family and friends, the majority also stay in paid accommodations at some point during their trip to Nova Scotia. The estimate of tourism expenditures and associated economic impact also includes the spending of people staying with family and friends*

*Nationally, Canada has agreed to measure tourism according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization's definition which is the "movement of people ... for personal and/or business/professional purposes". Nova Scotia works with the same standard and has agreed to exclude where possible military travel, travel for funerals and routine sales/shopping trips.*

*Nova Scotia works closely with both national and provincial tourism organizations to review and revise various national tourism measurement systems. On an ongoing basis we also work with these colleagues to identify opportunities for improving current measures and develop new ones consistent with data and resource availability. Both national and provincial jurisdictions often*

*consult with us regarding our methodologies as they are considered industry benchmarks. We also strive to release these key indicators within six weeks of the end of a month, making them accessible to the tourism industry and key stakeholders in a very timely manner.*

*If any municipality wishes to discuss the indicators, I would be happy to make available staff from ERDT/NSTA whose expertise is in this area.*