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June 29, 2020

Mr. Kyle Schole
Planning, Development & Heritage Assistant
Smoky Lake County

VIA E-MAIL

RE: Letter of Support

Dear Mr. Schole,

On behalf of Travel Alberta, I am pleased to offer our support for the Victoria District Economic Development Strategy.

As the destination promotion organization of the Government of Alberta, we promote Alberta tourism experiences to potential travellers across Canada and internationally and provide marketing expertise and destination development support to our Alberta stakeholders. Working with businesses and regions throughout the province, we develop memorable experiences for visitors to enjoy year-round.

Tourism directly and indirectly benefits Alberta, driving visitation and revenue, diversifying the economy, encouraging economic investment, and enhancing quality of life for Albertans and our communities. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Alberta tourism was an \$8.9 billion a year growth industry, supporting nearly 73,000 jobs in every corner of the province. Working with our partners in government and industry, our 2020-22 Alberta (re)Bound Strategy aims to rebuild the province's visitor economy to 2019 levels by 2023.

The Victoria District Economic Development Strategy will play an important role in our efforts to further enhance and develop authentic, experiential tourism offerings in the northern region of the province. For many years, people have been drawn to the rich culture, heritage, and natural beauty of the Smoky Lake region. Métis Crossing has emerged as a year-round destination centered on the distinct Métis Indigenous story and culture.

Travel Alberta fully supports the Victoria District strategy as it cultivates a captivating cultural destination, further diversifies the local economy, and promotes intercultural appreciation and understanding.

Sincerely,

Chris Heseltine
Acting Chief Executive Officer