

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**REPORT: LOCAL LABOUR MARKET SUPPLY NOT SUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT TOURISM INDUSTRY GROWTH IN SEA-TO-SKY REGION**

VANCOUVER – A new report released today by go2, the BC tourism industry's human resources association, on behalf of the Sea-to-Sky Tourism HR Strategy Steering Committee confirms that labour shortages already being felt in the Sea-to-Sky region will worsen over the next decade.

Factors including increased pressure from other sectors, an aging demographic, and the high cost of living in the resort region will make it increasingly more difficult for the area to attract sufficient workers over the next decade.

This new study of the Sea-to-Sky tourism labour market was conducted as part of a project to develop a long-term, comprehensive human resources strategy to support tourism growth to 2015 in the region. The project is coordinated by a steering committee comprised of local business leaders, chambers of commerce, Tourism Whistler, tourism operators, representatives from all municipalities, the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations, go2, Capilano College, and the CAW Union.

A key finding from the report found that tourism operators need to attract an average of 3,500 workers every year from outside of the Sea-to-Sky region, and that it will not be possible to recruit sufficient workers from the local labour market to fill this gap over the next 10 years. Additional report highlights are on the following backgrounder.

"There is an annual shortfall of workers for the tourism sector in Whistler and during the height of the winter season, the shortfall for workers will be even higher. With the overall tightening of the labour market, we clearly need to address this issue now," said John Leschyson, go2's Director of Industry Human Resource Development and project steering committee member.

As part of the planning process for the project, a series of public forums are being held throughout the region to gather ideas from everyone with a stake in the future growth and success of the tourism industry.

**Pemberton:** Monday, June 12<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Pemberton Valley Lodge  
**Squamish:** Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Capilano College Campus, Room 109  
**Whistler:** Wednesday, June 14<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Telus Conference Centre, Wedgemount Room

For those that cannot attend the public forum, there will be an online survey available for input. Visit [seatosky.go2hr.ca](http://seatosky.go2hr.ca) for details.

The public forums, focus groups and the online survey are being managed by Leadership Sea-to-Sky, a well-known local consulting firm retained by the Sea-to-Sky steering committee.

"The situation in terms of attracting temporary, or even permanent workers from elsewhere in Canada will not get better. The 2010 Olympic Games may attract young workers because of the appeal of working and being part of the Olympic experience. After that time the situation will revert to the underlying issues of a reducing youth population and hence a reduced available workforce across Canada and other countries, which have historically been a source of workers. This will result in increasing problems in attracting workers to Whistler," said Kirby Brown, Director of Experience Development and Delivery for Intrawest at Whistler Blackcomb, and a member of the steering committee.

The Sea-to-Sky Tourism HR Strategy is the first initiative to examine tourism human resource management issues in the region including transportation, housing, strengthening relationships with Aboriginal groups, better access to foreign workers, and ensuring front-line employees are equipped to provide world-class service.

The findings from the research and community consultation sessions will be used to develop a regional human resources plan to support tourism growth to 2015. The plan, expected to be completed in fall of 2006, will include recommendations on recruitment, retention and training to support tourism growth now, during and after the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

For more information on the report and the upcoming public forums, visit [seatosky.go2hr.ca](http://seatosky.go2hr.ca).

**About the Sea-to-Sky Tourism HR Strategy Steering Committee**

The Sea-to Sky Tourism HR Strategy Steering Committee has been formed under an agreement with Services Canada/HRSDC to undertake human resources planning and develop strategies to address skill requirements of tourism operators in the Sea-to-Sky region. The steering committee is comprised of local business leaders, chambers of commerce, Tourism Whistler, tourism operators, representatives from all municipalities, the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations, go2, Capilano College, and the CAW Union. It is chaired by Kerry Jothen of Human Capital Strategies. The Sea-to-Sky region includes all communities from Britannia Beach to Pemberton.

- See backgrounder following

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