

May 11, 2022

## Destination Greater Victoria signs Letter of Commitment for Biosphere Certification

**VICTORIA, B.C.** – Destination Greater Victoria CEO Paul Nursey and Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI) General Secretary Patricio Azcarate have signed a Letter of Commitment for Destination Greater Victoria to commence on the path towards Biosphere Certification from RTI. Biosphere Certification is granted by RTI on completion of a rigorous and collaborative program of sustainability assessment and initiatives, including alignment with the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The signing of the Letter of Commitment took place on May 11, 2022, at the 5<sup>th</sup> IMPACT Sustainability Travel and Tourism Conference in Victoria, BC.

By requiring fulfillment of a series of sustainability requirements, the process of achieving the globally-recognized Biosphere Certification informs and supports destination marketing and management organizations in developing more sustainable products and services to meet the current needs of customers without compromising future generations. It is a firm commitment to move towards the principles of environmental sustainability, cultural diversity, equity, and social responsibility.

The Letter of Commitment means Destination Greater Victoria will follow the World Charter for Sustainable Tourism +20 to align its practices with the 17 UN SDGs. This charter will guide Destination Greater Victoria through the Biosphere Certification process and states: "Tourism policy and development must be the result of an open, participatory and interactive dialogue between all partners involved in tourism development and in which local communities, industry and our Indigenous partners must play an essential role."

Pursuing a Biosphere Certificate also builds on previous Destination Greater Victoria sustainability initiatives, such as creation of the IMPACT Sustainability Travel & Tourism Conference, establishing a Sustainability Advisory Committee within Destination Greater Victoria's governance framework and designation of the organization as "Carbon Neutral" by leading carbon management solutions company Offsetters.

Information on Biosphere Certification can be found here:

<https://www.biospheretourism.com/en/biosphere-certification/83#bloque-400>

A video message from Patricio Azcarate, Responsible Tourism Institute General Secretary, about Destination Greater Victoria's commitment can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWtVZDX8DoQ>

### Quotes:

"Destination Greater Victoria committed to furthering sustainable tourism in its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Signing this Letter of Commitment at the IMPACT Conference today aligns with goals and objectives of the strategic plan. The Biosphere Certificate is a world-class designation and sets a high standard for Destination Greater Victoria. We look forward to working with our stakeholders and wider community to

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enhance sustainable tourism development and business practices.” Paul Nursey, CEO – Destination Greater Victoria

“It is amazing to see Destination Greater Victoria continue to prioritize sustainability in its operations. I know from conversations with other board members, as well as members of the community how important it is to pursue a certification like this. Destination Greater Victoria also has an opportunity to become a leader in sustainable tourism. I know we are all ready and excited to get to work.” Darlene Hollstein, Board Chair – Destination Greater Victoria.

“Destination Greater Victoria has a strong focus on sustainability. I am proud of the work we are doing within the governance framework and the ideas that are coming forward. The Biosphere Certification is just one example. Hotels, restaurants, transportation providers and attractions in our community care deeply about sustainability. It is great to see leadership, innovation and cooperation from business owners and operators as we work towards the Biosphere Certification.” Erin Cassels – Chair, Destination Greater Victoria Sustainability Committee

“It is a great pleasure to receive Destination Greater Victoria with this letter of commitment and welcome them to the Biosphere Destinations Community, where more than 2,500 destinations and companies align their efforts through the 2030 Agenda, the 169 targets and all the indicators that, in this continuous improvement, help them to be more sustainable and to align all the good practices in actions and activities within the areas of environment, climate change, socio-cultural, governance and economy. This is a methodology of positivity, of working together, of creating alliances and of getting involved and sharing what they are doing to measure how tourism is contributing to the sustainability of the territory.”  
- Patricio Azcarate, Responsible Tourism Institute General Secretary.

**Destination Greater Victoria** (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is our region’s official, not-for-profit destination marketing organization working in partnership with nearly 1,000 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria.

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