

Cost-saving for continuity

Dear Stakeholder:

The Bermuda Tourism Authority (BTA) Board of Directors announced this week a [slate of cost-saving measures](#) necessary across our organisation to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The cuts are deep. They had to be. There is no tolerance for business as usual at the BTA when our stakeholders have shuttered their businesses, laid off staff, and struggle to plan for a future that is entirely uncertain.



Like many of your businesses, the BTA's income sources are severely injured by this crisis. About a third of our budget required cutting in this initial expense-reduction exercise, given the loss of visitor fees that normally contribute to our annual budget. Staff workweek reductions, salary cuts, agency contract renegotiations, paused advertising placements, and the postponement of events are all part of a comprehensive strategy to preserve cash, maintain business continuity, and ready a marketing war chest to lead the destination's economic comeback.

With the organisation's budget revised, it's now up to BTA leadership to focus on keeping our team whole enough to plan the tourism recovery each of you is relying on once visitors can return. I wish I could tell you this is easy work. It is not.

How Bermuda reopens safely—and when—are challenging questions to answer. Moving too soon or side-lining public health for economic priorities is wrought with risk. Even as advocates for Bermuda's tourism economy, we would not endorse a plan that doesn't put the island's well-being at the forefront. A way forward guided by public health is the only way forward.

Every day we work closely with government partners to get their best advice based on an ever-changing set of circumstances. You've already seen the agility of our BTA team in the face of this fluidity, pivoting in response to recent COVID-19 developments:

- Our [webpage](#) for Bermuda Resources has attracted high traffic volume
- The Great Bermuda Takeout Day rallied support for our restaurant community April 2 before the island had to shelter in place
- Our [Resilience Roundtable webinar](#) and another on [social-media marketing](#) were both well-attended and received positive community engagement and feedback

We take this same attitude for adaptability to our recovery planning. We need to figure out which consumers to target when it's time to welcome visitors again. In which cities do we focus advertising spend? What airlift is available? What are the sentiments of cruise travellers? The answers to each of these questions is likely very different after COVID-19 than it was before.

The future is daunting, undoubtedly. Today, it's difficult to understand what our economy looks like even 30 days from now. But as the BTA navigates the unprecedented challenges of our seventh year as Bermuda's destination marketing organisation, we are motivated by the comeback that was only recently underway.

We must ready ourselves to do it again.

Sincerely,

Glenn Jones

Interim CEO & Chief Experience Development Officer