

FDFA takes Visitor Rebate Program battle to Parliament Hill



Members of the FDFA met Members of Parliament to discuss the return of the Visitor Rebate Program

Members of the Frontier Duty Free Association met with more than 35 MPs, Senators and senior officials as they brought their case for the return of Canada's Visitor Rebate Program to Parliament Hill.

The discussions were part of a two days event, labelled "Duty free on the Hill" which aimed to give association members the chance to both raise key issues and build relationships with government decision makers.

Before the second day of meetings, on May 16, the Official Opposition Shadow Minister for Small Business, Export Promotion and Tourism Blake Richards met with FDFA members and "spoke strongly in support of the return of a Visitor Rebate Program", according to FDFA Executive Director Barbara Barrett.



FDFA's Abe Taqtaq and Executive Director Barbara Barrett with MPs Ed Fast and Michael Barrett

In a newsletter sent to members, Barrett said: "During these exceptional days, we highlighted the need for the government to reinstate the Visitor Rebate Program and the unique nature of duty free. This engagement on the Parliament Hill was key to advocate for the return of the Visitor Rebate Program and positioning the duty free industry as a prosperous export sector."

She added: "We would like to thank all the members who joined us in Ottawa on these important days of advocacy and important meetings for the duty free industry. Your participation and support made this a success."

"FDFA is gearing up for a busy summer with the federal election looming. The return of the Visitor Rebate Program remains out number [one] priority this election cycle."

But the program is not the only matter on the table for FDFA members. During last month's Operators' Meeting, member were updated by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) about the latest news on its Assessment and Revenue Management Project (CARM).



CBSA Director Regulatory Trade Programs Charles Melchors updates FDFA members on the Assessment and Revenue Management Project

The scheme, which is set to be implemented in the second half of 2021, will make all CBSA submissions and transactions paperless, via an online portal. CBSA Director Regulatory Trade Programs Charles Melchors provided an update and assured members the CBSA will work with the FDFA to ensure CARM is a benefit to members.

In the newsletter Barrett explained: “The vision of CARM is to deliver a globally-leading customs experience that is customer-centric, facilitates legitimate trade, improves compliance and revenue collection and contributes to securing the borders of Canada.”