

End of 2019-2020 Ski Season confirmed for Quebec Ski Areas

Terrebonne, March 22, 2020 – Given the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, safety concerns for all personnel, the hazards of remaining equipment left on the slopes, and the desire to inform visitors as quickly as possible, the Quebec Ski Areas Association (ASSQ) confirms that, barring exceptional circumstances, winter activities at Quebec ski areas will not resume this season.

“Recent developments preclude any resumption of our winter activities. All ski area owners and operators have been significantly affected by the current situation. Not only is the industry suffering financial losses and layoffs resulting from crisis, but now, all communities are impacted” declared Jean-Michel Ryan, president and CEO of Mont Sutton and ASSQ’s chairman of the board.

“Since the crisis began, we have been in constant communication with representatives of the *Direction de la santé publique du Québec*, Tourism Quebec, the Quebec Tourism Industry Alliance (AITQ), and the crisis management group set up by the industry’s partners. The latest information we received states that we would not be able to reopen for the spring skiing season, unless a ski area would want to reopen in June,” explains Yves Juneau, president and CEO of the ASSQ. He points out that almost all ski areas usually end their season at the end of March or in early April.

The Association reminds season pass holders, ticket buyers and ski lessons purchasers that the provisions of the Quebec Consumer Protection Act will be applied to any consumer request. Customers who purchased products to be used at a later date, such as a ski lesson planned for March 28, but did not use it yet, may be reimbursed or may transfer it to next ski season. The Association anticipates a large number of calls and emails to customer services at ski resorts and asks everyone to be patient for follow-ups. In response to COVID-19, several ski areas are requested to limit the presence of personnel. Every customer will be answered, but delays are inevitable under the circumstances. The association also hopes that skiers and snowboarders can remain in solidarity with the industry by keeping unused purchases from this year and postponing the use of the products until next winter season. Several promotions will be planned by different ski areas to ensure the return of skiers next season. Given time, winter sports lovers will be invited to consult information posted by each resort for all the details.

Under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, season pass holders will not be eligible for financial compensation since the passes were valid only until the end of the 2019-2020 season, which has now ended, as per the government order. "The duration of the ski season is uncertain every year. Ski areas are not responsible for weather conditions and cannot guarantee the length of the ski season. We are faced with an act of God, and pass holders have been able to access the slopes for the majority of the 2019-2020 season" explains Mr. Juneau. Pass holders are also asked not to come to the ski areas to pick up stored equipment. The same goes for those who have rental equipment for the season. Ski lodges are closed until further notice" Mr. Juneau pointed out. The ASSQ also asks everyone to respect the closed mountain signs and keep off all ski area properties, particularly the skiable terrain.

On behalf of all ski areas, the association deeply regrets any inconvenience this decision may cause. All ski area owners and operators would like to thank Quebec's 1.4 million skiers and snowboarders and the many visitors from outside the province for their understanding support. Québec ski areas will now focus on preparing sites for summer activities with in the hope to be able to welcome summer visitors during the warm season.

About the Quebec Ski Area Association and the Industry

Founded in 1979, the ASSQ is a non-profit organization grouping together Quebec's ski areas. Its mission is to promote and defend the interests of the ski areas, to foster the development of the next generation, and to support the industry to offer skiers and snowboarders memorable experiences.

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Source:

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