

June 23, 2014

Hon. Jason Kenney, PC, MP  
Minister of Employment & Social Development  
140 Promenade du Portage  
Gatineau, QC K1A 0J9

Dear Minister Kenney:

In May 2014 our Chamber sent you a letter outlining the distinct nature of Saskatchewan's labour environment. Our province, along with Alberta, suffers from a labour shortage that curtails economic growth and lowers the standard of living of our residents, especially in our rural communities. We are thoroughly disappointed that you failed to consider these circumstances when developing the changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker program.

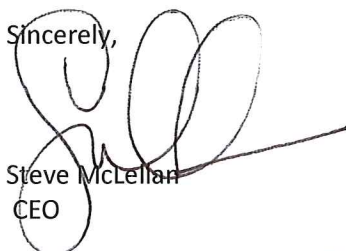
The dramatic reduction in the availability of Foreign Workers under the new program rules will create a considerable hardship for businesses in our province; services will be reduced, viable companies will close and Canadian employees may in fact lose their jobs. Our members are already indicating to us that the next course of action will be an increase in the outsourcing of production to other countries. This move will permanently forfeit Canadian employment opportunities and drop another skill set from our workforce. As a country we cannot afford to make such costly decisions on faulty information.

The previous Temporary Foreign Worker program had been incredibly beneficial and essential to Saskatchewan's prosperity. However, a lack of adequate labour market information has left your government unable to efficiently illustrate and understand this impact. Our frustration with this development is substantial as the lack of labour market information in Canada has been repeatedly identified as an issue over the last several years. We applaud your government for at least attempting to correct this with the newly announced surveys, but urge you to fully commit to the endeavour and institute the remainder of the 'Drummond Report' recommendations.

While better information is essential, it will do little for businesses suffering today. A 10% per worksite Temporary Foreign Worker limit is an arbitrary and impractical barrier, as are several other elements of the revised program. We are hoping that you will re-examine the condition of the labour market in Saskatchewan, and take this opportunity to build a stronger, regionally specific program for this province to allow business to successfully operate with the use of Temporary Foreign Workers. These individuals play a vital role in our community and we want to work with the government to ensure they are accessible to labour desperate employers and are treated respectfully.

We look forward to continuing this discussion with you in the future and I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak with you further on this topic, please contact our office at 306-352-2671.

Sincerely,



Steve McLellan  
CEO