

May 20, 2022

Sean Fraser

Minister of Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship
sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca

Re: Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot

Minister Fraser,

As the leading voice of business in the North Okanagan since 1897, the Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce writes in support of the Vernon and North Okanagan Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) project.

Since it was formed, RNIP has created a much-needed path to permanent residence for skilled foreign workers. In fact, there has been considerable success through the program as applicants and their families settle in the North Okanagan and embrace the community. “RNIP helps grow our business, but it also adds great community members and adds to the diversity of the region,” states a Vernon, B.C. company participating in the initiative.

RNIP’s pending expiry comes at the same time as there is a significant labour shortage in the North Okanagan and across Canada. Virtually every sector is experiencing a lack of workers and that is hindering economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the need to expand Canada’s workforce and the direct benefits skilled foreign workers bring to our community, our Chamber is calling on your Government to extend the pilot or, ideally, to make it a permanent program across the country.

We are confident that the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot is achieving its goal of spreading the benefits of economic immigration to communities outside of the larger metropolitan areas of Canada. The pilot also alleviates the burden employers are not able to undertake trying to source and assist skilled workers and their families in becoming successful Canadian employees and eventual citizens.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Robin Cardew, President
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

Mel Arnold, North Okanagan-Shuswap MP
City of Vernon Mayor and Council
District of Coldstream Mayor and Council
Regional District of North Okanagan Board of Directors
Okanagan Indian Band Chief and Council
Community Futures North Okanagan
City of Vernon Economic Development
Okanagan-Shuswap Chambers of Commerce
Canadian Chamber of Commerce