



Hon. Pam Alexis
Minister of Agriculture and Food
Room 325, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Hon. Harry Bains
Minister of Labour
Room 342, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

January 13, 2022

Dear Minister Alexis and Minister Bains,

Re: B.C. Temporary Foreign Workers Program application processing delays

We are writing to you regarding the unacceptably slow certification and application processing times for the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program in British Columbia, which pose a serious threat to many businesses and industries. Farmers, ranchers and others from the agriculture industry throughout B.C. have shared concerns about the risk to their industries that rely heavily on the TFW program for seasonal and experienced labour.

Currently, reports indicate that wait times for a certificate exceed ten weeks. The decision to implement the registration program as mandatory in October 2022 has created a delay in processing the surge of applicants, coupled with the lack of proactive action by the Ministry of Labour to provide timely service. The lack of proper communication mechanisms with applicants is also causing frustration and confusion. It is unacceptable that the government has failed to properly address the demand in applications by not adequately planning and staffing resources.

This crisis threatens farmers that rely on extra help during the calving season, potentially causing many livestock to die due to the lack of available care. The agriculture sector is also in immediate need of Seasonal Agricultural Workers (SAWP) as seasonal activities such as tree fruit harvest will begin soon. Crops don't grow and pick themselves, and B.C.'s food security must be protected. The delays also pose a risk to the trucking, manufacturing, tourism and fisheries sectors. Urgent action must be taken to address the undue stress this causes for employers, who are already facing significant challenges due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and now face a worker shortage. Help is needed now, and any further delays could be detrimental to our economy.

What is your government doing to address this critical matter before it becomes a much larger issue?

Sincerely,

MLA Greg Kylo
BC Liberal Official Opposition
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4



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CC:

Hon. Brenda Bailey
Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation