

June 7th, 2022

Hon. Arlene Dunn
Minister Responsible, Opportunities NB
Minister Responsible, Economic Development and Small Business
Departmental Building, West Block
P. O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Via email: arlene.dunn@gnb.ca

Dear Minister Dunn:

Re: Temporary Immigration Support for Food Service Businesses

I am writing today regarding the Government of New Brunswick's decision to pause usage of the Express Entry stream within the Provincial Nominee Program (hereinafter "PNP") for food service providers. This issue was originally brought to our attention on 1 June 2022 via an email from Mr Michael Petrovici, which you also received and subsequently responded. Since then, we have heard from several members of our chamber of commerce with the same concern and we have met with officials from your department and have a better understanding of the overall situation – including the relationship between this decision, New Brunswick's expected allotment of PNP and Atlantic Immigration Program (hereinafter "AIP") spots for 2022 and the delay in confirmation from the federal government.

As a result of these discussions, we have written to federal immigration minister Sean Fraser to request an immediate increase in PNP/AIP allotments for 2022, which will allow the Government of New Brunswick to reopen the Express Entry stream for food service (amongst other benefits).

In the meantime, it would appear that the federal Temporary Foreign Worker program is the primary alternative to the food service industry during this pause. This is, of course, not an ideal alternative for several reasons, but perhaps the biggest barrier during this time of recovery is the \$1000 per employee fee for a Labour Market Impact Assessment (hereinafter "LMIA").

We are requesting that your government:

1. Create a program to cover this cost for New Brunswick food service providers; and
2. Advocate to the federal government for the temporary removal of the LMIA requirement and/or fee; and/or:
 - a. Extend the requirements to establish business legitimacy to every 3 years.
 - b. Lower the minimum job advertisement requirement to 2 consecutive weeks within 3 months prior to submitting a LMIA.
 - c. Increase the proportion of temporary foreign workers that a business can hire from 20% to 35% of their workforce.
 - d. Increase LMIA validity to 18 months.



SAINT JOHN REGION

THE CHAMBER

CHAMPIONS FOR BUSINESS

While we appreciate the policy reasons for implementing the LMIA requirement originally, the workforce situation has drastically shifted in recent years. The country is at nearly full employment – including many regions of New Brunswick. In fact, in April, the government reported a 5.9% job vacancy rate and a 5.2% unemployment rate – clearly there is a need to bring more working-age individuals to Canada and New Brunswick as quickly as possible. The lack of available employees is a serious threat to our economic recovery. As you are aware, the food service industry was one of the hardest hit sectors during the pandemic and the 2022 tourism season is critical to fuel their recovery.

While we understand the current situation with the PNP is not the Government of New Brunswick's making, it is most certainly still an impactful problem felt in the province and without quick and decisive action, businesses in the tourism industry are facing their third consecutive season of unprecedented challenges. Many of them may not make it to 2023.

Sincerely,

David Duplisea, CEO, Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce

cc: H  l  ne Bouchard, Vice President, Population Growth, Opportunities NB

cc: Richard Alexander, VP Atlantic, Restaurants Canada