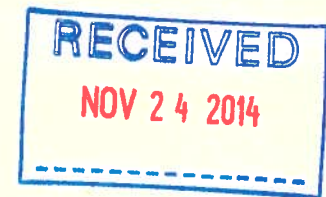




ALBERTA
JOBS, SKILLS, TRAINING AND LABOUR

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary-Hays*



AR60287

November 19, 2014

Ms. Helen Rice
AUMA President
Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
300, 8616 - 51 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T6E 6E6

Dear Ms. Rice:

Helen

Thank you for your letter of October 15, 2014 and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) 2014 resolution regarding the federal Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program. It was also a pleasure meeting with you and the AUMA Executive Committee on November 6, 2014 to discuss the impact of the TFW program reforms and the Alberta government's response to our labour force challenges.

The Government of Alberta's priority has been, and always will be, that Canadians are hired first. We acknowledge the difficulty some employers have in finding Canadians to fill jobs; however, TFW's are not meant to replace Albertans or to fill permanent jobs. Our government supports changes that increase enforcement and penalties to ensure more stringent compliance of the TFW program. We will continue to work with the federal government on immigration and advocate for labour force strategies that respond to market demands and ensure Alberta has the workers we need to drive our economy.

As I mentioned during our meeting, I recently met with the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada, and the Honourable Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, to discuss ways to work together on developing permanent workforce solutions to support Alberta's continued economic growth and labour needs. I will keep you updated on these important discussions.

As you may know, Alberta has led all provinces in economic growth over the past 20 years and is positioned to remain the engine that powers Canada in the years ahead. Our unemployment rate was 4.6 per cent in 2013, the second lowest in Canada and well below the national rate of 7.1 per cent. Our challenge remains finding permanent workers to fill permanent positions across this province.

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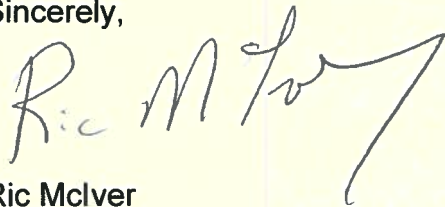
While Alberta is openly collaborating with our federal counterparts to find methods of attracting and retaining people to fill available jobs, we have a wide variety of strategies and initiatives in place to support employers in recruiting and retaining a local workforce. This includes helping ensure under-represented groups such as Aboriginal people and youth participate more fully in the labour force. Workforce Consultants and Alberta Works offices can assist employers to connect with the local workforce by calling the Employer Information Hotline at 1-800-611-3753 or 780-422-4266 in the Edmonton area.

The workplace laws for temporary foreign workers are the same as for other Alberta workers, and we apply them in exactly the same way. Alberta leads the nation in its support systems for TFW's. We have TFW Advisory offices that offer support and referrals to various government organizations as well as many immigrant servicing agencies.

I appreciate AUMA's leadership in advocating for urban municipalities across the province and welcome your ongoing collaborative efforts to help create a sustainable workforce in Alberta. I am confident that together, with the federal government, we can find permanent solutions to ensure our province's future prosperity.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,



Ric McIver
Minister

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