



Representing the Districts of Kenora, Rainy River and Thunder Bay

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October 31, 2024

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
Via email: Justin.Trudeau@parl.gc.ca

RE: Request for Delay in IRCC PGWP Reforms to Address Program Eligibility Concerns

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

I am writing on behalf of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association to express significant concerns regarding the recent reforms to the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) program introduced by the federal government. These changes, introduced abruptly, will severely impact our ability to address critical labour shortages in northwestern Ontario, while undermining the strategic talent pipeline that supports our economic ecosystem. Without swift intervention, these reforms could have serious consequences for the economic prosperity of Thunder Bay and regional communities.

Upon reviewing the eligibility list released by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) on October 4th, it is evident that there are substantial and concerning omissions — many of which may be unintentional.

Programs offered at Confederation College that are not currently listed on the IRCC list include:

- All engineering technical and technology programs
- All business programs at an undergraduate level and most graduate certificate business programs
- Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene
- Registered Nurses (although practical nursing is on the list)
- Culinary Management (while the IRCC list includes meat cutters)
- Development Services Worker
- Early Childhood Education

These programs have both domestic and international students enrolled. Without the participation of international students, the viability of these programs will be severely jeopardized. NOMA is concerned to see the exclusion of these vital fields as this will drastically limit the educational opportunities for international students.

It is essential to recognize that Northern Ontario is uniquely positioned to embrace population growth in a way that other major urban centers may find challenging. Unlike communities such as the Greater Toronto Area, which grapple with intense pressures on housing and infrastructure, our region offers a welcoming environment with the capacity to accommodate

new residents without straining our existing resources. Moreover, we need skilled labourers to grow our economy and ensure the vitality of Northwestern Ontario.

We strongly urge the federal government to reconsider the hasty implementation of the PGWP reforms. The potential negative impacts on the day-to-day lives of Ontarians, and Canadians more broadly, are substantial. We also emphasize the importance of collaborating with Ontario to address our region's unique labour market needs, particularly in northwestern Ontario. Postponing the implementation beyond November 1st would allow the government the necessary time to consult with industry leaders, provincial authorities, and the public college sector. This delay would also help to minimize disruptions to businesses, clarify confusion, and address the challenges that have already arisen during the rollout.

While we acknowledge the federal government's intention to regulate temporary migration, destabilizing essential talent pipelines and jeopardizing the sustainability of college programs is not the answer. We urge you to delay the implementation of these reforms and to work collaboratively with stakeholders to protect the businesses and services upon which Ontarians depend.

Sincerely,



Fred Mota, Executive Vice President, Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association
Mayor, Municipality of Red Lake

CC

The Hon. Mark Miller, federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada;
The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario;
The Hon. David Piccinni, Ontario Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development;
The Hon. Nolan Quinn, Ontario Minister of Colleges and Universities;
The Hon. Vic Fedeli, Ontario Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade;
The Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services - Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario MP Thunder Bay—Superior North
The Hon. Marcus Powlowski, MP Thunder Bay—Rainy River
The Hon. Eric Melillo, MP Kenora
The Hon. Greg Rickford, MPP Kenora – Rainy River
The Hon. Lise Vaugeois, MPP Thunder Bay—Superior North
The Hon. Kevin Holland, MPP Thunder Bay - Atikokan
Michelle Salo, President, Confederation College
Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce
All member municipalities CAOs and Clerks