



March 2nd, 2020

Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
400 University Avenue, 4th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2R9

RE: Proposed Amendments to Ontario Regulation 422/17 (General), a Minister's Regulation made under the Ontario Immigration Act, 2015

To whom it may concern,

Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed amendments to the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) under the *Ontario Immigration Act, 2015*. BFO represents the 19,000 beef farmers across Ontario by advocating in the areas of policy planning, industry development and research, environment, animal health and welfare, and domestic and export market development.

The Ontario beef industry is experiencing significant labour shortages in beef cattle processing, which is an additional challenge to the current severe processing capacity shortage in Eastern Canada. According to Meat and Poultry Ontario, there is an estimated shortage of 2,400 meat cutters in Ontario. This is equivalent to \$1.2 billion in lost productivity. In addition, a study conducted by Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council in 2017 concluded there is a 9.7 per cent meat cutter vacancy rate for rural abattoirs compared to the national average of 1.8 per cent.

BFO supports the proposed amendments to the OINP as they will help address the labour shortage in Ontario abattoirs, ease the administrative burden when accessing the program, and support more employers across the entire province. BFO welcomes the addition of the National Occupation Code (NOC) 9461: process control and machine operators, food, beverage and associated products processing to the In-Demand Skills Stream, in addition to the current general farm worker and industry butcher/meat cutter NOCs.

In addition to the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade's proposed amendments to the OINP, BFO requests the following recommended amendments also be considered. These additional amendments would further assist in ensuring meat processing facilities can readily access the OINP.

- Align the educational requirements for the In-Demand Skills Stream with those of the Government of Canada's Agri-Food Immigration Pilot. The Agri-Food Immigration Pilot requires



applicants to obtain an educational credential assessment report from a designated organization or professional body, showing completion of a foreign credential at the secondary school level or above. This requirement allows further flexibility for applicants when applying for permanent residency in comparison to obtaining an educational credential assessment report that proves the applicant's education level is equivalent to a Canadian high school diploma.

- Further streamline and allocate more nominees to labour-demanding sectors in response to extreme labour shortages across the province, especially within rural areas. This will increase access for sectors with immediate demand and reduce the wait times for applicants and employers.

On behalf of BFO, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed amendments to the OINP under the *Ontario Immigration Act, 2015*. We would be pleased to meet with the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade to further discuss our recommendations on how the OINP can aid in reducing the extreme labour shortages in beef processing in Ontario.

Sincerely,



Rob Lipsett
President

cc: BFO Board of Directors

