



****For Immediate Release****

The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce Supports Temporary Foreign Workers and their Employers Calling for Consultation by the Federal Government, Stakeholders, Employers and their TFW Employees

“The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce believe that an evidenced based approach to forming public-policy must take precedents over relying on unsubstantiated anecdotal stories. The Chamber is calling on the federal government to immediately engage in meaningful consultations with stakeholders, including chambers of commerce, employers, and TFWs themselves. Informed policies and streamlined processes are essential to ensure TFWs’ well-being and successful integration.” – B.J. Griffith, Chair, Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce

In correspondence with the Government of Canada the Commissioner, Canada Employment Insurance Commission published a letter to the Trudeau Government raising similar concerns and outlining the success of the existing program and due diligence of the employer community. Where they express their concern about the tenor of pending changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and the way this program has become much maligned despite the rigour that has characterized it for many years. The Commissionaire also points out that amid demographic shifts, skills gaps and labour shortages, Canada has no better option but to leverage immigration to sustain and grow our labour market.

In its latter to the Trudeau Government the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce writes:

..... Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce (writes) to express our unwavering support for temporary foreign workers (TFWs) and their vital role in our local economy. As an organization committed to fostering economic growth and prosperity, we recognize the significant contributions TFWs make to our community.

1. **Addressing Labor Shortages:** TFWs fill critical gaps in our workforce, particularly in sectors facing labor shortages. Their skills, dedication, and work ethic enhance productivity and allow businesses to thrive. Without TFWs, many businesses would struggle to meet demand, affecting overall economic growth.
2. **Diverse Skill Sets:** TFWs bring diverse skill sets, enriching our local talent pool. Their expertise spans various industries, from agriculture to healthcare, construction, and hospitality. By collaborating with TFWs, our businesses gain access to global knowledge and innovative practices.
3. **Maximizing Productivity:** TFWs enable businesses to maintain productivity when Canadian workers or permanent residents are unavailable. This is critical to our agricultural sector as their presence keeps Canada’s food supply system running smoothly.
4. **Economic Impact:** TFWs contribute directly to our economy through spending on goods, services, and housing. Their presence stimulates local businesses, creating a positive ripple effect. Additionally, TFWs pay taxes and contribute to social programs, benefiting all residents.
5. **Strengthening Rural Economies:** TFWs contribute directly to rural economies by working in various sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and tourism. Their labor supports local businesses, generates income, and sustains rural livelihoods.
6. **Addressing Seasonal Demands:** Rural industries, such as fruit picking or fishing, have seasonal demands. TFWs provide flexible labor during peak seasons, supporting local businesses and ensuring timely production.

7. **Ensuring Food Security and Sustainability:** The limited domestic labor supply in agriculture necessitates hiring workers from outside Canada. TFWs directly impact food security, sustainability, and the economic development of the sector.
8. **Population Stability:** In many rural areas, population decline is a concern. TFWs help stabilize local populations by filling critical labor gaps. Their presence ensures that essential services continue to operate effectively.
9. **Cultural Exchange and Diversity:** TFWs bring diverse cultural backgrounds, traditions, and perspectives to rural communities. This enriches local life, fosters cross-cultural understanding, and promotes diversity.
10. **Community Engagement:** TFWs often participate in community events, volunteering, and social activities. Their involvement strengthens community bonds and creates a sense of belonging.

We encourage the government of Canada to engage in meaningful consultations with stakeholders, including chambers of commerce, employers, and TFWs themselves. Informed policies and streamlined processes are essential to ensure TFWs' well-being and successful integration.

"While safeguarding TFWs' rights, we advocate for a balanced approach that allows employers to access the workforce they need. Streamlined procedures, fair wages, and transparent regulations are key to achieving this balance."-Rory Ring, President & CEO, Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce.

We urge the government to recognize TFWs as valuable contributors to our growing economy. By fostering an inclusive environment and promoting stakeholder collaboration, we can maximize the benefits of their presence while ensuring their rights and well-being.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to continued dialogue and collaborative efforts to support TFWs and our local economy.

Sincerely,

BJ Griffith, Chair and Rory Ring, President CEO

For media inquiries, contact:

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About Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce:

The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce serves as the recognized voice of visionary leadership for over 350 members and businesses in the Chatham-Kent community. Their mission is to champion business excellence by encouraging business relations, integrating business with the community, and fostering entrepreneurship. They aim to enhance economic prosperity and quality of life for local businesses. You can find them at 54 Fourth St, Chatham, ON N7M 2G21. For inquiries, you can reach them at (519) 352-7540 or via email at info@chatham-kentchamber.ca.

August 9, 2024

Government of Canada

Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Employment & Workforce Development

Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship

Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety

Honourable Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

Honourable Steven MacKinnon, Minister of Labour and Seniors

Honourable Soraya Martinez Ferrada, Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec

Subject: Supporting Temporary Foreign Workers for a Thriving Economy

Dear Ministers,

I am writing on behalf of the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce to express our unwavering support for temporary foreign workers (TFWs) and their vital role in our local economy. As an organization committed to fostering economic growth and prosperity, we recognize the significant contributions TFWs make to our community.

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While safeguarding TFWs' rights, we advocate for a balanced approach that allows employers to access the workforce they need. Streamlined procedures, fair wages, and transparent regulations are key to achieving this balance.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to continued dialogue and collaborative efforts to support TFWs and our local economy.

Sincerely,



BJ Griffiths, Chair



Rory Ring, President CEO

Cc: MP, David Epp
MPP, Trevor Jones
MPP, Steve Pinsonneault
Mayor, Darren Canniff
CAO, Michael Duben
Director C-K Economic Development, Stuart McFadden
Director, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Louis Roesch