

BC Fruit Growers' Association

Friday File

October 13, 2017



Provincial Budget Input

Annual opportunity

The BCFGA made a [presentation on the provincial budget](#) to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services in Kelowna, October 13, 2017.

Highlights:

- BCFGA supports “[Grow BC, Buy BC, Eat BC](#)”.
- BCFGA requests additional Replant Funding, as promised in the campaign and given the Premier’s direction to Agriculture Minister Popham in her [Mandate Letter](#).
- Noted that programs administered by associations are delivered effectively and efficiently - asked that committee encourage the Minister and Deputy Minister in taking this new direction.
- Asked that the committee recommend that government services be aligned to increase the scope of the SIR program to enable it to tackle more pests and especially invasive pests.

Additionally, the presentation emphasized the following.

- The BCFGA supports the School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program as a way of reducing diagnostic, chronic and critical health care costs, which will in turn make life more affordable for British Columbians.
- The agriculture sector’s need for harvest workers exceeds the local supply of workers, so foreign harvest workers are essential to the industry. We noted that the Labour Minister’s mandate letter included direction to implement a database of foreign workers and their locations. We also noted that SAWP workers are already in a database, as the program is overseen by the foreign government, Service Canada, and WALI. Therefore, we suggested the government should not spend its money on a duplicate database for SAWP workers, but instead direct the funds to improving worker housing and educating growers about the program.
- The Columbia River Treaty impact on the tree fruit and vegetable sectors was raised as an issue. BCFGA noted it is meeting with Minister Conroy about the CRT review and asked that the committee support Minister Conroy as the review progresses.

You can help achieve the recommendations to the Budget 2018 Review by visiting this website and [completing the survey](#) before Monday October 16 at 5 pm!

Caribbean SAWP Update

We Ready

Caribbean countries also participate in the SAWP. Many growers employ Jamaican workers, as the Jamaican Liaison Services are located in Kelowna, which enhances communication, which many growers and employees appreciate.

Other Caribbean countries are also eager to expand the number of their citizens on the program - the employment income is genuinely appreciated by the employees and the Caribbean country of origin.

BCFGA encourages growers to look at all options for hiring workers, and of course remembering that there is an obligation to seek Canadian workers before foreign workers. We have met with consular officials and Ministers of Labour from Jamaica, Barbados and St. Lucia in the past 2 years, as officials travel to the Okanagan to seek to promote the program. The tiny Caribbean countries of Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis were hit by hurricanes in the past few months and their citizens and governments would certainly be thankful for employment opportunities in SAWP. Also, St. Lucia has expressed interest in having growers interview workers in the St. Lucia prior to hiring.

For Caribbean SAWP workers, flights are comparably priced and often less costly than the Mexico City - Kelowna flight. When applying for the Caribbean SAWP, growers name the Caribbean “source country” on the Labour Market Impact Assessment. These countries are all anxious to expand their program in Canada. The options for Caribbean source countries are, in alphabetical order:

Caribbean SAWP Source Country	Country Population (2015 est)	SAWP workers in Canada, (average 2005-2009)	Contact	Phone
Antigua and Barbuda	93,900	9	Charmaine Williams*	416-523-4662
Barbados	287,500	428	Shirley Wall-Mayers	416-464-2997
Dominica	72,700		Charmaine Williams*	416-523-4662
Grenada	107,900	94	Charmaine Williams*	416-523-4662
Jamaica	2,790,200	6,821	Donna Adams	250-869-6288
St. Kitts and Nevis	55,400	29	Charmaine Williams*	416-523-4662
St. Lucia	183,800	234	Charmaine Williams*	416-523-4662
St. Vincent and Grenadines	107,900	291	Charmaine Williams*	416-523-4662
Trinidad and Tobago	1,332,700	2,040	Gaston Thongs	416-435-7048

*Eastern Caribbean Liaison Service includes the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Monserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Reminders

2018/19 BC Tree Fruit Replant Program

Application deadline is in 6 weeks

The 2018 Replant Program deadline is **November 15, 2017**. [Information may be viewed on the BCFGA website.](#)

Meetings and Events - check the [BCFGA Calendar](#) on our website for more information

Date	Meeting	Attending for the BCFGA
Oct. 15	Rob Dawson - Celebration of Life (2 pm, Victory Hall, 427 - 7th Ave, Keremeos)	
Oct. 23	BC-Caribbean Regional SAWP	Pinder Dhaliwal, Glen Lucas, Bunvir Nijjer
Oct. 25	BCTFC Annual Meeting	
Oct. 27	SIR Board Planning Session	Walter Makepeace, Amarjit Lalli, David Dobernigg, Glen Lucas
Oct. 30	BCFGA Crop Protection Committee (9-noon)	Peter Simonsen, Glen Lucas, Bunvir Nijjer
Oct. 30	BCFGA Labour Committee (1-3 pm)	Pinder Dhaliwal, Glen Lucas, Bunvir Nijjer
Nov. 7	BCAC Agriculture Day	
Nov. 14	BCFGA Executive	
Nov. 19-25	Caribbean SAWP Annual Review	Pinder Dhaliwal, Glen Lucas
Nov. 28	BCFGA South Regional AGM	
Nov. 30	BCFGA North Regional AGM	
Dec. 4	BCFGA Executive	
February 15-16	BCFGA Annual Convention	

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- Brenda Jorde, Member Services and Replant Admin, local 1.
- Glen Lucas, General Manager, local 2.
- Bunvir Nijjer, Corporate Secretary and Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program, local 4.