



December 30, 2022

Peter Pokorny
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Agriculture and Food
PO Box 9120, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W9B4

Dear Peter,

Best of the holiday season to you, your family, and your staff.

I am writing today to raise to your attention the extended delay for registration in the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Employer Registry of the provincial Ministry of Labour.

The requirement for employers of TFW's was put in place, effective December 15, 2020. The rationale for the registry is much the same as the rationale for a driver's licensing system. The registry was accepted by industry based on a reasonable turnaround time in approvals.

In 2021, the turnaround time was less than one week, and sometimes as little as a day or two. This turnaround time was observed by growers to be acceptable.

Currently, time to register is 2 to 3 months. This long turnaround time is unacceptable and we have received many producer complaints. The impact of the delay is to cause TFW applications to be held until the proof of registry in the provincial TFW Employer Registry is provided - this adds time to an already cumbersome process.

The delay is causing hardship to growers who already face a months-long process to obtain housing inspections, processing of the TFW application, and consequent processing and worker documentation requirements in the foreign country (Ministry of Labour for the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and private recruiters for the Agriculture Stream).

Delays in arrival will delay time-critical orchard operations, such as timely pruning, thinning and harvesting of the crops. Delays will impact fruit quality and/or the volume harvested. In days of heightened food security awareness, as outlined recently in the Minister's mandate letter, an increase in processing farm labour applications from two days to three months is clearly at odds with food security.



250-762-5226
1-800-619-9022



info@bcfga.com



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880 Vaughan Ave
Kelowna, BC V1Y 7E4



We have requested the BC Agriculture Council to seek a meeting with the Minister of Labour. Additionally, we are requesting your intervention in opening a dialogue with the BC Ministry of Labour.

We are asking for the support of the BC Ministry of Agriculture to help the BC Ministry of Labour understand the consequences of these unacceptable delays in processing TFW Employer Registry applications. The BC Ministry of Labour based its registry on the Manitoba TFW Employer Registry. In Manitoba, the registration includes a checkbox for SAWP and AG Stream employers, and such employers are accorded expedited processing - i.e. days not months. However, in BC there is no provision for expedited processing for SAWP and Ag Stream. However, it is equally important that expedited processing should have a service standard of no more than one week turn-around.

Thank you for your attention and help with this issue.

Sincerely,

Glen Lucas
General Manager

cc. BC Agriculture Council



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