

November 27, 2015

The Honourable Lori Sigurdson
Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour
404 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Sigurdson,

As you are well aware, farming and agriculture are central to the rural economy and rural life. While this industry has changed considerably in recent years, it still remains the bedrock of many rural communities. Bill 6: *The Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act* introduces some much needed protections to paid farm workers. The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) wants to emphasize that safety on Alberta's farms, must be of the highest priority.

While the AAMDC agrees that farm safety is of paramount importance, we recognize concerns that have been raised in recent days, in particular family farms, about how some of these amendments may impact farming operations. At the very least, there seems to be ambiguity about which types of workers and farm work falls under the legislation and proposed protections, and what types of work this will impact.

We appreciate that to allow for input from Albertans on this legislation, a series of workshops were scheduled across the province; however, the short timeline between these consultations and the proposed legislative amendments many of which are scheduled to come into place January 1, 2016, is concerning and it is unclear how the Government of Alberta will incorporate input received from Albertans when drafting the legislation. Additionally, high interest among Albertans on this issue has meant that the consultation sessions have nearly completely filled up leaving many unable to attend, as was the case in Grande Prairie on November 26, 2015.

The AAMDC asks that additional time be devoted to the consultation period to ensure Albertans and the Government of Alberta fully understand the impacts that this legislation could have on the operations of small family farms. The vast majority of Albertans, including agriculture operators, are in favor of fair and safe working conditions for all. However, in order to tailor regulations to the nuances of the agriculture industry and ensure that farmers are not unfairly burdened by a one-size fits all legislation, a slower process in which all voices are heard and all opinions considered is necessary so that other unintended consequences' can be addressed.

We would like to offer our assistance in helping draft regulations. We feel the AAMDC, along with the Agriculture Service Boards, can bring first-hand knowledge to the table as well as a logical perspective that will make any changes more palatable for all.

On behalf of the AAMDC Board of Directors, I thank you for your attention to this matter and appreciate your commitment to ensuring the sustainability of rural Alberta and the agriculture sector. The AAMDC would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter in further detail. I can be contacted at akemmere@aamdc.com or 403.507.3345.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Al Kemmere', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Al Kemmere
President

cc: The Honourable Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta

cc: The Honourable Oneil Carlier, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry

cc: The Honourable Danielle Larivee, Minister of Municipal Affairs