



Premiers Committed to Enhancing Skills Development and Immigration

SASKATOON, SK, July 10, 2019 – Supporting effective labour mobility and foreign qualification recognition processes, ensuring workers can access needed skills and training, and building an inclusive and diverse labour market are essential to growing Canada's economy and creating jobs. Premiers are committed to ongoing progress in these areas. Premiers also acknowledged the importance of increasing safety on Canada's roads through work on mandatory entry-level training for truck drivers.

Transportation Safety

The matter of road safety, for drivers, passengers and other road users, has been at the forefront of collective thought since the tragic Humboldt Broncos bus crash in 2018. The tragedy reverberated throughout Saskatchewan, across Canada and around the world. It prompted Canada's provincial, territorial and federal leaders to take a more urgent look at the state of road and commercial vehicle safety in this country and how it can be improved to help prevent future collisions.

Several jurisdictions have already made changes to improve safety by implementing ambitious mandatory entry-level training for those seeking Class 1 licences. Further, ministers of transportation also made significant progress in January 2019 by committing to develop a national standard for entry-level training for commercial drivers in Canada by January 2020. Premiers commend the work of transportation ministers in achieving this critical outcome.

As much of the responsibility for road and commercial vehicle safety lies with provinces and territories, Premiers have a leadership role to play in making safety requirements consistent and fair across the board. With this in mind, Premiers commit to being well on their way to adopting a minimum national entry-level training standard by 2021. Building on the work underway, a new minimum standard will strengthen commercial vehicle safety on roads across Canada through the application of a consistent and reasonable approach.

Premiers are also committed to exploring online programming options for the in-class portion of the training with the goal of making training more accessible for those seeking a Class 1 commercial license.

Labour Mobility and Foreign Qualification Recognition

An agile and skilled workforce is critical to a strong economy. Premiers task provincial and territorial labour market ministers to work toward mutual recognition of occupational qualifications. Premiers direct provincial and territorial ministers responsible for apprenticeship to continue pursuing apprenticeship mobility and identify other opportunities to encourage full participation in existing pan-Canadian initiatives.

Newcomers and foreign-trained Canadians must be able to get timely and fair assessments of their qualifications in order to find good well-paying jobs and participate fully in Canada's economy. Existing work on foreign qualifications recognition has provided meaningful progress on enhancing the timeliness and fairness of foreign qualification recognition processes. Premiers direct labour market ministers to develop a strategic plan that will enhance collaboration, and seek opportunities to improve timeliness, fairness and transparency of assessment processes for newcomers.

Immigration and Labour Market

Canada's economic prosperity relies on a skilled, flexible, innovative and inclusive workforce. This includes: an ability to grow our working age population; engaging Indigenous peoples; attracting and retaining immigrants to support the vibrancy of our communities, and supplement and enhance a skilled labour force; assisting seasonal and precariously employed workers; and, fostering entrepreneurship.

Immigration

All forms of immigration play a critical role in building an inclusive, diverse and prosperous society. It is imperative that the economic and social benefits of immigration, including Francophone immigration, are spread widely among Canadian communities. Premiers reiterated the importance of Provincial and Territorial Nominee Programs and that provinces and territories are best placed to determine the most appropriate nominee selection criteria based on jurisdictional needs and priorities. Premiers called on the federal government to ensure timely and efficient processing of provincially and territorially nominated economic immigrants. Premiers emphasized the importance of economic immigration to help meet labour market needs and called on the federal government to achieve a minimum target of 65% of annual admissions for economic immigrants (including skilled workers, business people and entrepreneurs).

Premiers emphasized the importance of policies that prioritize hiring Canadian citizens and permanent residents, and also discussed the need for flexibility in the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to meet the needs of small and medium sized enterprises who can demonstrate difficulty in finding Canadian workers.

Under the Canada-Québec Accord relating to immigration and temporary admission of immigrants, Québec fully assumes sole responsibility for establishing immigration levels, and for the selection, francization and integration of immigrants. In areas under its responsibility, Québec develops its policies and programs, legislates, regulates and sets its own standards.

Premiers discussed the increased number of individuals crossing the border outside of regular ports of entry, and how this has put pressure on shelters, housing, education, health care, language training and other support services in impacted jurisdictions.

Premiers call on the federal government to provide full compensation to affected provinces for the costs incurred. They also urged the federal government to make the necessary investments to ensure the timely adjudication of refugee claimant hearings and expedited processing of all immigration applications into Canada.

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