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September 29, 2017

The Honourable Ahmed D. Hussen MP
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa ON K1A 1L1

Re. Economic Immigration Level Increase

Dear Minister Hussen,

The NSBA is a Saskatoon-based, member-driven business association that serves, promotes, and protects business throughout Saskatoon and beyond through our lobbying and advocacy efforts. From its grassroots origins some 50 years ago by a handful of businesses, today's NSBA consists of a membership in excess of 700 companies. Members range from single owner-operator proprietorships to large multinational corporations that employ thousands. Although diverse, our membership mainly consists of a strong community of small to medium-sized businesses that are largely owner-managed by entrepreneurs.

Saskatchewan is seeing an economic recovery take hold in 2017 and an estimated 89,400 job openings are expected over 2016-2020. Of these jobs, 20 per cent are attributed to increased economic activity and 80 per cent are due to workers leaving the labour force, mainly because of retirement. Our province and our membership has been effective at exercising all of their options to engage their available labour supply. The province leads other provinces in the employment rates for youth, older workers, recent immigrants, and non-Indigenous men, and has established a strategic emphasis on programs/services that can improve the employment rates for women and for Indigenous workers.

Some sectors of the economy continue to have strong job growth, despite softer labour market conditions. In 2016, jobs were up in higher-paying industries such as professional, scientific and technical services (+12.0%); information, culture and recreation (+7.9%); trade (+4.6%); utilities (+3.0%); and public administration (+2.4%). To remain competitive and/or to expand their operations, these employers need access to qualified workers and many of our members are currently feeling this pinch.

An experience gap is exacerbating talent challenges for Saskatchewan employers, including our members. As they grapple with the need to replace retirees, employers' main options are to hire young and mid-career workers who may lack experience and competencies. The latest annual data (2016) indicates that 19 per cent of Saskatchewan workers are over employed (compared to 18 per cent for Canada), which is to say that they are working in occupations that require more education/experience than they currently have. This is one consequence of a tight labour market (but is also a reflection of a broader trend among some employers to require higher credentials over time).

Saskatchewan's Provincial Nominee Program is an important tool for attracting economic immigrants to Saskatchewan. In 2016, the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) accounted for 90% of all

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economic immigrants to Saskatchewan. Immigration has accounted for the majority of the province's population growth and recent immigrants, who landed in Canada within the last 10 years, accounted for nearly half of the employment growth in Saskatchewan from 2011 to 2016.

In order for Saskatchewan's economy to continue to grow in the years to come, we strongly advocate for an increase in Canada's Immigration Levels Plan. That would ensure that economic immigration through provincial nominee programs is not reduced due to increases in other Federal immigration classes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Moen', written in a cursive style.

Keith Moen
Executive Director

Cc/ The Honourable Steven Bonk, Minister of the Economy, Government of Saskatchewan