

September 18, 2024

The Hon. David Piccini
Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
14th Flr, 400 University Ave.
Toronto ON M7A 1T7

Re: OINP Nominations for Northern and Rural Communities

Dear Minister Piccini,

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) is the indispensable partner of business and Canada's largest, most influential provincial chamber. We are an independent, non-profit advocacy and member services organization representing a diverse network of 60,000 members. The OCC's mission is to convene, align and advance the interests of its members through principled policy work, value-added business services and broad engagement to drive competitiveness and inclusive, sustainable economic growth in the province.

Labour shortages continue to challenge the growth and success of businesses across Ontario. These challenges are most evident in northern and rural regions of the province, where [demographic shifts](#) are being driven by several factors, such as the out-migration of working-age persons. Northern Ontario's population is aging faster than the rest of the province and has lower birth rates. These trends limit the ability of businesses to fill vacancies, given the shallow pool of skilled workers. As a result, it is [estimated](#) that Northern Ontario will need 100,000 newcomers by 2041 to sustain current population levels.

Maintaining and accelerating population growth in Northern Ontario is the key to future sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

For almost a decade, the OCC has championed the need for the federal government to increase Ontario's allocation of nominations under the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP). These calls were heard by the federal government and led to the allocation of more than double, from 9,750 in 2022 to 21,500 in 2024. We thank your government for ensuring those additional allocations are working to address key labour market shortages.

However, with the expansion of this allocation, the Province must now take deliberate steps to continue to support the needs of northern and rural communities. We join over 40 organizations calling on the Government of Ontario to take deliberate steps to set aside 3,000 nominations from the overall allocation annually to target skilled immigrants wishing to reside in Northern Ontario. The Northern Policy Institute has highlighted that annual immigration at this level will build on the success of the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot and maintain the standard of living and economic growth in the region.

At the same time, the Province must continue to establish and deliver on workforce development strategies, including the fast-tracking of immigration, addressing backlogs and prioritizing the skilled trades.

We look forward to working with your government as it continues to pursue an all-hands-on-deck approach to addressing labour shortages as a means to spurring economic growth and prosperity in all corners of the province.

Sincerely,



Daniel Tisch, APR, FCPRS, ICD.D

President and CEO

Ontario Chamber of Commerce