



July 9, 2014

The Honourable Jason Kenney, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment and Social Development
140 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0J9

The Honourable Chris Alexander, P.C.,
M.P. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1L1

Dear Ministers:

I am writing on behalf of all the organizations whose logos appear at the end of this letter. We represent a broad cross-section of the film and television production industry, and are writing you today because we are unified in our concerns that recent changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) will result in unintended consequences that threaten the 5.8 billion dollars in annual production activity across the country, and the almost 128,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) Canadian jobs in our sector. We represent over 350 independent Canadian producers; all of the major U.S production studios; unions, guilds, and associations representing Canada's crews, cast and directors; national equipment rental companies; post-production houses; and major provincial screen-based associations. On this issue, we are speaking with a single voice and we are urging the government to act quickly to protect the almost \$7.5 billion in Canada's Gross Domestic Product and \$2.3 billion in export value our sector is responsible for each year.

We believe the particular nature of our industry has not been taken into account in government policies related to the TFWP, particularly with respect to the most recent changes to this program announced on June 20, 2014. Given the unique circumstances in which temporary foreign workers (TFWs) are utilized in our sector, the process and framework through which they are brought into Canada must align with the realities of film and television production in order to grow the significant economic investments of this industry. We do not believe this is the case with the TFWP as it currently applies to our industry and we urgently ask to meet with you and your officials as soon as possible to explore feasible and effective solutions to this critical issue.

.../2



-2-

While our concerns relate to the film and television production sector as a whole, the issue is particularly relevant to the Foreign Location Services (FLS) segment of our industry. This segment involves local companies “servicing” the production needs of foreign firms that choose to carry out their film and television production work in Canada. Each year, these productions account for \$2.3 billion in GDP and sustain some 38,000 high-paying FTE jobs. Being able to quickly and efficiently access a certain limited number of key TFWs who are instrumental to such projects is critical for local production companies in Canada to remain a viable business option in this fiercely competitive market around the world. The present uncertainty in this regard will raise serious concerns with foreign producers in determining whether they can continue to choose Canada as a place to do such business. Put simply, unless producers have certainty that they will be able to quickly and easily bring in certain key roles on productions, they will choose other locations around the world that aggressively compete for this business, resulting in the loss of tens of thousands of Canadian jobs across the country.

We are extremely concerned that issues relating to the TFWP, and the recent changes announced on June 20, 2014, undermine the sustainability and future growth of our industry. The production industry recognizes the Government of Canada’s legitimate concerns regarding the possible misuse of the TFWP in certain sectors. In our industry, however, TFWs are not being used to take jobs from Canadians who would otherwise fill those roles. In fact, our industry’s use of the TFWP results in the creation of tens of thousands of high-paying Canadian jobs. In a single television or film production, the granting of a handful of TFW work permits can result in the creation of a multiplicity of Canadian jobs ranging from costume designers to grips, electricians to carpenters, set builders to special effects artists, location managers to camera operators.

In addition, the new requirements related to Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs) are inconsistent with our industry’s ordinary course of business. For example: the new LMIAs now include a need for plans to transition to Canadian workers, which are not pertinent to the manner in which our industry operates; the processing times are inconsistent with FLS episodic television productions, which are responsible for some \$1 billion in production volume each year in Canada; the increase in the LMIA processing fee has a negative impact on Canada’s competitiveness as a production location; and the ability to now extend a work permit only a few days beyond the estimated completion of work means individuals returning for “re-shoots” soon after their permits expire must be reprocessed at considerable time and expense. Indeed, these changes only add to the concerns of our industry in relation to the four-year cumulative duration regulation, and the uncertain scope and application of the myriad changes announced on June 20th that were designed to address the use of TFWs in entirely different sectors where these changes have application.



-3-

The film and television production sector is a significant employer and economic driver in Canada but we fear that the TFWP in its current form will severely limit our ability to continue to create jobs and economic growth in this country. We are confident that we can work with you to ensure the continued health and growth of our industry, and to protect and enhance the 128,000 Canadian jobs it sustains each year.

We will follow up with your respective offices to schedule a meeting with you and/or your officials as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Michael Hennessy

Michael Hennessy
President and CEO

On behalf of:



cc: The Honourable Shelly Glover, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages
The Honourable James Moore, Minister of Industry Canada
Ian Shugart, Deputy Minister, Employment and Social Development Canada
Anita Biguzs, Deputy Minister, Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Colleen Swords, Deputy Minister, Canadian Heritage
John Knubley, Deputy Minister, Industry Canada