



March 19, 2026

The Honourable David Eby
Premier of British Columbia
Victoria, British Columbia

Via email: Premier@gov.bc.ca

Re: Rural Hotels & Tourism Providers Need Provincial Advocacy on Temporary Foreign Worker Policy

We are writing on behalf of hotels and tourism operators in rural and remote regions across British Columbia to express our deep concern and growing frustration with the current policy direction regarding temporary foreign workers and the province's reluctance to fully engage in the federal rural workforce program.

Rural tourism and hospitality operate in fundamentally different labour conditions than those in major urban centres. These communities have limited local labour pools, highly seasonal demand, and persistent housing constraints. Despite extensive recruitment efforts within Canada, many hotel and tourism operators are unable to fill essential front-line positions such as housekeeping. These roles are critical to safe operations, guest service, and regulatory compliance.

Temporary foreign workers are not a convenience for rural tourism and hospitality; they are a necessity. Without access to this workforce, operators are being forced to reduce room inventory, limit operating days, or suspend services altogether. In some cases, properties and attractions are facing the very real prospect of closure.

In a survey of the BCHA membership last summer, workforce availability was the number one concern raised province wide. 71% of responding hotels expected employees to lose work authorization within 6–12 months. This timeframe is quickly approaching.

These outcomes directly undermine rural economic development, tourism growth, and employment opportunities for Canadians who depend on a viable hospitality sector.

BC recently released its Tourism Sector Action Plan which demonstrated the essential role tourism plays in building our economy, with \$48B of economic impact as a goal for 2036. We support this plan wholeheartedly and look forward to participating in this ongoing economic development.



It is therefore disappointing to see British Columbia hesitate on opting into a federal program specifically designed to address rural labour shortages. This short-sighted stance fails to acknowledge the operational realities faced by rural employers and risks further destabilizing an already fragile sector. Hotels and attractions cannot be relocated, downsized seasonally without consequence, or automated in ways that replace essential human labour.

Rural tourism and hospitality anchors local economies. We support supply chains, employ residents year-round, and make tourism possible in regions the province actively promotes. When we cannot operate, entire communities feel the impact.

We understand and respect your recent comments indicating that British Columbia does not support the federal government's broader direction on temporary foreign worker policy. At the same time, the current federal measure is both limited in scope and duration, with a defined timeline from April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027. It is not a structural change, but rather a short-term staffing measure intended to stabilize rural labour markets while longer-term solutions, including pathways to permanent residency, are advanced. Participation in this temporary measure can be positioned as a pragmatic, time-bound response to immediate workforce pressures, one that supports rural businesses and tourism operators through the 2026 and early 2027 seasons without altering the Province's long-term policy stance.

We respectfully urge the Province of British Columbia to reconsider its position, opt into the federal rural temporary foreign worker program, and actively advocate for its implementation in a way that reflects the needs of rural tourism and hospitality operators.

If the Province does not opt in to this program, it is our understanding that the allocation of temporary foreign workers will be redistributed to other provinces, missing a vital opportunity to fill in the gaps in our sector and solidify the industry prior to the FIFA World Cup and the busy summer season that brings so many visitors to our beautiful province.

BC tourism and hospitality operators are committed to fair wages, good working conditions, and supporting reforms that give international workers clear, dignified immigration pathways. What we require is a labour framework that reflects the realities of rural British Columbia and enables us to continue contributing to the province's recovery and long-term economic resilience.



BRITISH COLUMBIA
HOTEL ASSOCIATION

TOURISM INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION OF



BCDMOA
British Columbia Destination Management Organization Association

The BC Hotel Association, Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia, and the BC Destination Management Organization Association agree with your position on permanent residency and have been advocating at a national level for a “Path to PR” for our workers. However, for workers and their families to apply for permanent residency they first need employment, which this federal program will help support and sustain.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and to work collaboratively with the province to develop sustainable workforce solutions and hope the province will demonstrate leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Paul Hawes
President & CEO
**British Columbia
Hotel Association**

Amber Papou
CEO
**Tourism Industry
Association of BC**

Jikke Gyorki
Chair
**BC Destination Management
Organization Association**