Mr. Glenn van Dijken

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Dear Mr. van Dijken

I am writing you this letter at a very unstable time with many changes coming to us every day. This Covid-19 virus is taking the world by storm and we now feel the effect right here in our local area.

I am a second-generation beekeeper in your constituency and we rely extensively on skilled foreign workers to care for our bees and operate our business successfully. As we have not been able to find sufficient labour in our local area we have become completely reliant on the Seasonal Ag Worker Program. Our farm has had seasonal workers from Mexico for the past 25 years. Currently we have a experienced crew where many of the beekeepers have worked for us between 10-15 years. They are very skilled and understand our business very well. We are not able to find workers with this amount of skill and experience anywhere else.

The beekeeping Industry in Alberta has grown to be the largest in Canada. It not only brings revenue through the products the bees produce such as honey and wax, but also plays an important role in pollinating crops such as hybrid canola in Alberta and blueberry’s and apples in BC.

The announcement today to close borders to all non-Canadian or American travelers has come as a shock to our entire industry. We are within days of our workers arrivals and our season is about to start.

I understand the safety of Canadians is the number one concern to the Canadian government at this time and I do appreciate that. We take the risk very serious and when our workers arrive we would be prepared to keep them comfortably isolated for the recommended 14 days.

At this point we are asking for a conditional exemption to this travel ban. As producing high quality food is very important to Canada we hope we can continue to work together to strengthen Agriculture in Canada.

Sincerely   
Curtis Miedema

Barrhead Alberta

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