



December 23, 2016

The Honourable John McCallum, P.C., M.P.
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1L1

Dear Minister McCallum:

I am writing to you today in response to your reply dated November 30, 2016 concerning the relocation of workload from the Vegreville CPC to Edmonton.

In your letter, you state several reasons why Vegreville did not meet the requirements for consideration and we must refute the information you cited.

You indicate that there have been ongoing tenant service issues at the current location dating back to 2013. We are aware that the building owner has done over \$250,000 of upgrades since 2010 and the building meets national building code. Maintenance records indicate all issues (tickets) were resolved and we also are aware that many service calls were duplicated which may be reflected as inflated numbers.

Your letter references recruitment and retention of qualified and bilingual staff. The fact is that job postings are only done online and never advertised in local/regional media. Job postings have been primarily term or casual. Of course applicants choose not to apply because (1) why would they leave another job for a term or casual position and (2) why would they consider relocating anywhere not knowing how long the job will be. Term and casual employees receive no assistance for relocation so the positive of a position at CPC is outweighed by the negative of the costs involved with accepting a term or casual position.

Regarding the recruitment strategies you listed:

- Student recruitment – These postings go Canada wide so it is listed for any of the CPC's
- Advertised opportunities – Again, these postings are not done locally and the process is cumbersome
- Casual employment – CPC does use casual employment and to our knowledge, they have always been able to fill the advertised positions
- Student bridging – students were in the stream for 2016. As of April 2016, students who had already applied were advised via email “You had been contacted regarding bridging, however constraints of the current Human Resource Plan do not allow us to continue with student bridging at this time. If the opportunity arises, we will keep your interest in mind.”

Your letter and public statements indicate that 20% of the staff commute from Edmonton to Vegreville daily. If you consider 240 employees, that means 48 commuters. We believe there are only approximately 25 commuting which is almost half of the numbers that have been quoted by yourself and other MP's.

You state that current indeterminate employees will be offered positions as will term employees. Will you be covering relocation costs for terms and casuals? And again, for term or casual employees why would they uproot their lives and families for a term assignment?

It has also been repeated by yourself and several Liberal MP's that a significant portion of the workforce is retiring in the near future. You had stated in your letter that number is 42% within 5 years and this week, Minister Sohi stated 42% in 2 to 3 years. Based on the requirements for superannuation, we fully dispute the percentage being stated publicly. We also would challenge any retirement statistics being determined solely on age as the federal public service does not have an age limit so calculations based solely on age would be misleading and frankly bordering on discrimination. Please advise how this percentage was calculated.

Our members tell us that recruitment because of the location of the CPC has not been the issue but rather the precarious nature of employment offered. Does the 17% of staff who have left the workforce include terms and casuals? Please advise how this percentage was calculated.

And finally, while not stated in your letter, it is very concerning that now yourself and other MP's are citing inefficiency as a reason for the closure. The Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship 2015-2016 Annual Report repeatedly states that processing targets are being met. Staff at the CPC have not been told they are not meeting targets and the previous government repeatedly acknowledged the efficiencies of the CPC. We are also aware that CPC Vegreville employees are completing work for other CPC locations. These numbers are not reflected as having been completed in Vegreville. Please advise where there are inefficiencies and what management has done to ensure targets are met.

Our members, your employees take pride in the work they do and what they are able to contribute to the community of Vegreville and surrounding rural communities. Expanded operations in Alberta are most welcome and this could easily be accomplished by opening a satellite office in Edmonton while leaving the current CPC in Vegreville. Once again, I strongly urge you to stop this initiative.

I look forward to your timely response on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Robyn Benson
National President

Cc: Chris Aylward, National Executive Vice-President
Marianne Hladun, Regional Executive Vice-President, Prairies