
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Economic Development

PROGRAM HELPS TOURISM/HOSPITALITY, TRUCKING INDUSTRIES

VICTORIA – British Columbia is launching a two-year pilot project aimed at foreign workers to help offset serious labour shortages in the tourism/hospitality and trucking industries, Economic Development Minister Colin Hansen announced today.

The entry-level and semi-skilled pilot project under the B.C. Provincial Nominee Program will help these industries retain workers that they recruit internationally through expedited access for permanent residency. Spouses and dependents of nominees are also eligible for permanent residence under the program.

“The trucking and tourism/hospitality industries play a critical role in our export-oriented economy, and are experiencing persistent labour shortages,” Hansen said. “B.C.’s labour shortages are no longer limited to skilled occupations.”

Based on industry growth patterns, B.C.’s tourism/hospitality industry will need 84,000 more workers in the next decade – an average of one new job every hour for the next 10 years

About 37,000 new professional drivers across Canada are needed each year; at least 4,500 new drivers are required annually in B.C. alone. Hansen said B.C. is relying more and more on temporary foreign workers to meet its labour needs, but temporary workers do not provide a permanent solution to long-term shortages.

“The industry associations asked us to use the Provincial Nominee Program to help them retain valued foreign workers and reduce the loss of productivity and the ongoing costs of continuously having to replace temporary foreign workers,” Hansen said.

The pilot, which begins today, is open to eligible employers in the tourism/hospitality and long-haul trucking industries, and to temporary foreign workers in entry level and semi-skilled occupations who have been employed by their B.C. employer for at least nine months.

Criteria for the pilot project will ensure that workers have the ability to establish themselves successfully in B.C., and that employers will offer good employment prospects and working conditions.

Occupations eligible for the pilot include long-haul truck drivers, and high-demand service occupations such as food and beverage servers, tour guides, hotel front desk clerks, food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and housekeepers.

The B.C. Provincial Nominee Program will closely monitor compliance and employee retention, and will undertake a comprehensive review of the pilot project prior to its initial expiry.

Visit the PNP website for more information: www.pnp.gov.bc.ca

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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