

Honourable Michael McLeod

Member of Parliament for Northwest Territories

House of Commons

Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

February 3, 2025

Re: Urgent Action Needed on Immigration for the Northwest Territories

Dear MP McLeod,

On behalf of businesses across the Northwest Territories, we urgently call on your office to take immediate action to increase immigration allocations for our territory. We appreciate the commitment you have shown in prioritizing immigration, the reality is that our territory is at a critical juncture—without a rapid and substantial increase in newcomer arrivals, our economy, workforce, and long-term sustainability are at serious risk.

To address this, we ask for your immediate support on two key priorities:

1. **Increase Immigration Allocations for the Northwest Territories** – We urge the federal government to immediately expand our allocations under existing programs such as the Provincial Nominee Program. The current cap of **150 spots** is **completely inadequate** given the scale of workforce shortages, more nomination spots must be secured immigration pathways to meet labor demands.
2. **Develop a Targeted Immigration Strategy for the North** – We have recommended to the GNWT on the creation of an immigration workgroup, comprising local, regional, and federal economic partners, to design a comprehensive immigration strategy that addresses the unique needs of the Northwest Territories. This strategy should include the development of a dedicated immigration pathway tailored to our region’s economic and demographic landscape like other regions across the country have been awarded.

Attracting and retaining newcomers remains a critical issue for the Northwest Territories, where population growth lags behind other regions of Canada. Despite the value of immigration as a tool for addressing labor shortages, economic decline, and regional development, the Northwest Territories has not seen the same immigration benefits as other parts of the country. While areas like Ontario, Quebec, and the Western provinces have seen significant success in attracting immigrants through targeted programs, our region remains underrepresented in immigration numbers.



Despite being home to vast economic potential, the Northwest Territories continues to lag behind in immigration. The Northwest Territories is already falling behind in immigration, attracting just **0.10% of all economic immigrants in 2024**, despite making up **0.11% of Canada's population**. In contrast, most other smaller provinces and territories welcomed **125% to 268%** of their population share in economic immigrants. This imbalance underscores the gaps in immigration that leave our region without the workforce necessary to sustain economic and community growth. As it hinders our ability to fill critical labor gaps, retain skilled workers, and sustain businesses and target growth.

Programs like the **Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP)** have proven highly effective in helping smaller provinces attract their share of immigrants, but the Northwest Territories lacks similar tailored initiatives. By increasing immigration pathways targeted at our region's unique economic and demographic needs, we can begin to address critical labor market demands, support local businesses, and bolster community development.

Beyond the economic imperative, immigration is directly tied to **Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic**. A dwindling population in the North weakens our national presence in this critical region. Sustainable, long-term settlement through immigration is **not just an economic issue—it is a national priority**.

MP McLeod, the time for action is now. We can no longer afford to delay or miss the opportunity to secure the support our region desperately needs. We are ready to work with you, but we need swift and decisive leadership to ensure the necessary immigration allocations and targeted strategies are put in place immediately.

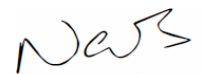
Sincerely,



Matthew Haliday
Executive Director
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce



Francois Afane
Directeur Général
CDETNO



Newton Grey
President
NWT Chamber of Commerce



Honourable Caitlin Cleveland

Minister of Education, Culture and Employment
Government of the Northwest Territories
PO Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9

February 3, 2025**Re: Urgent Action Required on Increased Immigration Allocations**

Dear Minister Cleveland,

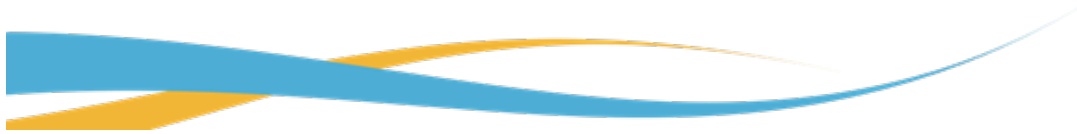
On behalf of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce and our economic partners, we urgently call on your office to take immediate action to increase immigration allocations for the Northwest Territories. We appreciate the commitment you have shown in prioritizing immigration, the reality is that our territory is at a critical juncture—without a rapid and substantial increase in newcomer arrivals, our economy, workforce, and long-term sustainability are at serious risk.

We are calling on your office to take the following urgent actions:

1. **Secure Increased Allocations Immediately** – The current cap of **150 spots** is **completely inadequate** given the scale of workforce shortages across Yellowknife and the Territory. More nomination spots must be secured immigration pathways to meet labor demands.
2. **Develop a Targeted Immigration Strategy** – Establish an immigration workgroup with key stakeholders—such as local, regional, and federal economic partners—to design a targeted immigration strategy that aligns with the needs and opportunities of the Northwest Territories. This strategy should include a dedicated pathway specifically tailored to the unique economic and demographic requirements of the region.

Without action, the consequences will be severe. Employers are **desperate to retain workers**, yet with such limited allocations, they **have no viable path to keep in the talent they need to survive**. The economic and social impact of inaction will be devastating.

Despite being home to vast economic potential, the Northwest Territories continues to lag behind in immigration. The Northwest Territories is already falling behind in immigration, attracting just **0.10% of all economic immigrants in 2024**, despite making up **0.11% of Canada's population**. In contrast, most other smaller provinces and territories welcomed **125% to 268%** of their population share in economic immigrants. Newcomers to Canada primarily settle in Ontario and Quebec, as well as Western and Central provinces. While these regions benefit significantly from immigration, areas like the Northern Territories have not seen similar population growth due to the lack of specific programs aimed at encouraging newcomers to settle in these regions. This imbalance hinders our ability to fill critical labor gaps, retain skilled workers, and support business growth.



Meanwhile, successful models like the Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP) have proven how targeted immigration pathways can drive regional growth. In just two years, AIP increased economic immigration in Atlantic Canada to 29% of all newcomers in the region—a model we urgently need in the Northwest Territories. Without a similar strategy, we will continue to fall behind.

Beyond the economic imperative, immigration is directly tied to **Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic**. A dwindling population in the North weakens our national presence in this critical region. Sustainable, long-term settlement through immigration is **not just an economic issue—it is a national priority**.

Minister Cleveland, the time for action is now. We cannot afford further delays or missed opportunities. We stand ready to support your efforts, but we need decisive leadership to secure the necessary allocations and long-term strategies immediately.

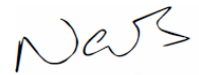
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