



Memorandum

TO: Krista Power, Director of Legislative Services & City Clerk **FILE:**

FROM: Councillor Kristen Oliver
Chair – Inter-Governmental Affairs Committee

DATE: 11/19/2024

SUBJECT: Post-Graduation Work Permit Program Reforms

MEETING & DATE: Committee of the Whole - 12/02/2024

At the November 13, 2024 Inter-Governmental Affairs Committee (IGAC) meeting, the committee discussed recent reforms to the Federal Government’s Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) program.

Organizations, including Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC) and Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) have expressed strong concerns over the reforms, which they believe will negatively impact the local economy and workforce. The reforms exclude PGWP key programs at Confederation College that are aligned with the needs of employers in Northwestern Ontario, including fields such as engineering, dental hygiene, early childhood education, and business. These exclusions will worsen the region's skills shortages and threaten businesses’ ability to fill critical labour gaps.

Northwestern Ontario, unlike urban areas in other parts of Canada, may be better positioned to welcome new residents and address labour shortages without overwhelming resources, such as housing and infrastructure. Directing immigration efforts toward rural and remote areas like Northwestern Ontario will help to revitalize local economies, contribute to the region’s growth and ensure a vibrant future for our communities.

The above-noted organizations have submitted letters to the Prime Minister and Minister of Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship, urging the Federal Government to delay implementing the PGWP reforms beyond November 1st. They believe this delay would allow for meaningful engagement with stakeholders to ensure the program meets

the region's unique labour market needs and prevents disruptions to businesses and educational programs.

IGAC supports the call to delay implementation of the PGWP reforms, and as such, the following motion is provided for Council's consideration:

WITH RESPECT to the Memorandum from Councillor Kristen Oliver, Chair – Inter-Governmental Affairs Committee, dated November 19, 2024, we recommend that Council calls for the Federal Government to delay the implementation of PGWP reforms as these changes will have profound negative impacts on Northwestern Ontario and worsen the region's critical labour gaps;

AND THAT the delay of PGWP reforms would allow the Federal Government the necessary time to engage collaboratively with industry leaders, provincial authorities, and the public college sector, to safeguard economic growth in Thunder Bay and across Northwestern Ontario;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be provided to the Prime Minister and Minister of Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship in addition to the Presidents of Confederation College and Lakehead University;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.