



04 December 2024

Honourable Danielle Smith
Premier, President of Executive Council
Office of the Premier
Executive Branch
307 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
premier@gov.ab.ca

RE: UCP GOVERNMENT RECRUITING TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS FOR ALBERTA JOBS

Dear Premier Smith:

The Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) has longstanding concerns about the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). Unscrupulous employers often view the TFWP as a first choice for recruiting workers rather than a last resort. Unfettered use of the program brings down wages, drives up unemployment and leaves local workers behind in terms of on-the-job training and work experience.

That's why I was surprised, to say the least, to find the UCP government preparing a mission to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for Alberta-based employers to hire from a "large pool of migrant workers" currently employed overseas. The UCP government's support for these employers to hire foreign workers includes venue arrangements for interviews, advertising to attract foreign workers, coordinating interviews with prospective migrant workers, and assistance with hotels and flights.

Premier Smith, you were elected to serve all Albertans, not just employers looking to drive down wages by using the TFWP. Alberta has the highest unemployment rate west

of the Maritimes, and our wage growth is at, or near the bottom of the barrel. Using the TFWP, especially for large industrial projects, will make an already bad situation worse.

Simply put, Premier Smith, it is unacceptable that the UCP is helping employers aggressively recruit Temporary Foreign Workers when so many Albertans are out of work and underpaid.

On behalf of the thousands of unionized Alberta workers represented by affiliates of the Alberta Federation of Labour, I am demanding answers.

Why do you think the government of Alberta should help employers bypass the local labour market in favour of a cheaper one halfway around the world?

How, Premier Smith, can you look unemployed Alberta workers in the eye and tell them this mission to the UAE is a good idea?

I am a believer in Alberta, Premier Smith. I am a believer in the work ethic and know-how of the workers that call Alberta home. This mission to the UAE for employers to hire foreign workers suggests you and I are starkly different in this regard.

I eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gil McGowan', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gil McGowan
President
Alberta Federation of Labour