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March 4, 2022

Hon. Jon Reyes
Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Mb, R3C 0V8

Re: Immigration Advisory Council

Dear Minister Reyes:

The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association congratulates you and Dr. Lloyd Axworthy on your recent appointments as co-chairs of the Immigration Advisory Council.

While the MHCA speaks specifically to the needs of the heavy construction industry, its advocacy is rooted in the principle of advancing economic growth, which supports the world-class social programs that underpin our standard of living.

In that vein, the MHCA welcomes the review of Manitoba's immigration recruitment and retention programs. Immigration has built this province and it is vital to its cultural and economic success.

Immigration patterns historically track the world's tumultuous economic and political events. The current tragic hostility roiling Ukraine has triggered the exodus of more than 1 million people. Canada has announced it will expedite visas for Ukrainians. Manitoba has always opened its arms to those fleeing conflict, human rights abuses or economic turmoil, and it should answer in the call now.

Manitoba's heavy construction industry has benefitted from successive immigration waves and the arrival of newcomers under all form of immigration programs. The Provincial Nominee Program has served as the foundation of strong migration to our province, strengthening to Manitoba's culture and economy.

Labour recruitment to the heavy construction industry, which employs directly and indirectly 15,000 Manitobans, has historically seen its challenges and expects to meet stiffer competition for skilled labour in the coming years. The Manitoba Labour Market Outlook, 2021-2025, estimated a shortage of 1,600 to 2,000 construction trades helpers and labourers within five years; anecdotal discussions in our industry note persistent difficulty in recruiting entry labour and skilled labour, such as equipment operators, low-bed drivers, pipe layers and concrete finishers.

The MHCA respectfully requests that when the above effort you co-chair begins its work, there be an opportunity to meet to discuss and consider the needs of the heavy construction industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Lorenc', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Lorenc, B.A., LL.B.
President, MHCA

cc. MHCA Board of Directors

PNP 2022/Reyes Axworthy Ltr PNP March 2022