

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF SAULT STE. MARIE

April 24, 2018

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Honourable Ahmed D. Hussen
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Laura Albanese
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Toronto, Ontario
6th Floor, 400 University Avenue
M5G 1S5

Dear Minister Hussen and Minister Albanese,

RE: Remedial measures to address immigration imbalance

We, the members of Northern Ontario Large Urban Mayors (NOLUM), are reaching out to both of you, the Provincial and Federal Ministers responsible for immigration, regarding the implementation of remedial measures to address Ontario's immigration imbalance. NOLUM members are calling for the Government of Ontario to partner with the Government of Canada to implement a program similar to the Atlantic Immigration Pilot.

Northern Ontario faces challenges very similar to those in Atlantic Canada and even more precarious demographic issues.

For instance, according to a report from the Government of Ontario, *Ontario Population Projections Update, 2016-2041*, the number of children aged 0 to 14 is projected to increase in Ontario, but decline in Northern Ontario and the majority of rural areas are expected to have significantly fewer children by 2041. Meanwhile, Northern Ontario's share of seniors in the population is expected to increase to over 25% percent in most areas and the general aging of Northern Ontario's population will result in a projected overall negative natural increase. Additionally, Northern Ontario is experiencing net out-migration, mostly among young adults, which reduces both current and future population growth.

These challenges are significant factors in the projected decline of Northern Ontario's population. *Ontario Population Projections Update* indicates Ontario's population is expected to grow between 2016 and 2041, but Northern Ontario is projected to see an overall decrease from 797,000 in 2016 to 782,000.

Due to our demographics, age structure and youth outmigration, Northern Ontario requires immigration to simply maintain but hopefully grow our population. The most important factor contributing to population growth identified in *Ontario Population Projections Update* is migration and Northern Ontario receives only a small share of international migration.

Large urban areas currently receive most of the international migration to Ontario, precipitating the need for a policy change. Census results (25% sample data) indicate Greater Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, Thunder Bay and Timmins received 2,285 immigrants between 2011 to 2016, while Ontario received 472,170 immigrants.

As a comparison, census results (25% sample data) indicate New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island experienced a net immigration increase of 12,075 people between 2011 and 2016, while Greater Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, Thunder Bay and Timmins experienced a net immigration increase of 205 people during the same period.

While we appreciate why and how you saw the need for the immigration pilot in Atlantic Canada, we are hopeful that you can clearly see it in Northern Ontario. Our communities are struggling and the demographic challenges we face will only become more acute if we do not make immediate policy changes to address them. Action is required from the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to assist and support our efforts and implementing the Atlantic Immigration Pilot in Northern Ontario is an obvious and accessible solution.

We urge you to work together and with us to implement a program similar to the Atlantic Immigration Pilot in Northern Ontario.

We look forward to your reply.

Yours truly,



Christian Provenzano
Mayor of Sault Ste. Marie



Steve Black
Mayor of Timmins



Keith Hobbs
Mayor of Thunder Bay



Al McDonald
Mayor of North Bay



Brian Bigger
Mayor of Greater Sudbury