

February 2, 2023

The Honourable Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
Immigration and Citizenship Canada
365 Laurier Ave W,
Ottawa, ON, K1P 6A6

Re: Extension of Open Work Permit scheme for Hong Kongers

Dear Minister,

Please accept this letter outlining our support for extending and expanding the Open Work Permit scheme for Hong Kongers, which is due to expire next week.

The introduction of the Open Work Permit scheme by your predecessor was an important step in addressing the deteriorating human rights situation in Hong Kong. As of October 31, 2022, 134 Hong Kongers have been able to come to Canada under the scheme to build a life here and contribute to Canada's economic growth. This low number of successful applicants is a reflection of the difficulties many Hong Kongers are facing to applying for Stream B, as the graduation requirement of five years serves as an obstacle for many who successfully applied for the Open Work Permit, accumulated the necessary work experience, and intend on applying for permanent residency through Stream B.

As you will be aware, the situation in Hong Kong continues to deteriorate as the Communist Party of China rapidly encroaches on citizens' basic rights and freedoms. The need for Hong Kongers to leave the territory is increasingly dire, with the national security police just last week arresting six Hong Kong book sellers for the supposed crime of "publishing seditious materials".

If Canada is to live up to the Indo-Pacific Strategy which commits us to "stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Hong Kong" it must continue its commitment to support Hong Kongers by providing viable ways out of the city and extending the scheme beyond its current end date.

It is vital that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada announce the decision to extend and expand the scheme with expediency to offer those Hong Kongers who are eligible for the scheme clarity so they can plan their exit from the city.

It is our hope that the Government will extend and expand the Open Work Permit scheme as a signal that Canada will continue to work with like minded partners to stand with Hong Kong, by providing human rights defenders, families, and young Hong Kongers, safe pathways out of the city.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Marie Barron MP
Nanaimo—Ladysmith

Rachel Blaney MP
North Island—Powell River

Blake Desjarlais MP
Edmonton Griesbach

Leah Gazan MP
Winnipeg Centre

Jenny Kwan MP
Vancouver East

Alistair MacGregor MP
Cowichan—Malahat—Langford

Brian Masse MP
Windsor West

Lindsay Mathyssen MP
London—Fanshawe

Dan Albas MP
Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola

James Bezan MP
Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman

Kelly Block MP
Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek

Hon. Ed Fast MP
Abbotsford

Jasraj Singh Hallan MP
Calgary Forest Lawn

Tom Kmiec MP
Calgary Shepard

Michael Kram MP
Regina—Wascana

Dan Muys MP
Flamborough—Glanbrook

Brad Redekopp MP
Saskatoon West

Scott Reid MP
Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston

Karen Vecchio MP
Elgin—Middlesex—London

Brad Vis MP
Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon

Jenica Atwin MP
Fredericton

Hon. John McKay MP
Scarborough—Guildwood

Marcus Powlowski MP
Thunder Bay—Rainy River

Hon. Judy A. Sgro MP
Humber River—Black Creek

John Williamson MP
New Brunswick Southwest

Michael Cooper MP
St. Albert—Edmonton

Hon. Hedy Fry PC MP
Vancouver Centre

Garnett Genuis MP
Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan