Alberta Federation of Labour

The Honourable John McCallum
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

December 8, 2016

Dear Minister McCallum:

RE: Please reconsider the closure of the Vegreville Immigration Centre

I am writing to you on behalf of the Alberta Federation of Labour to urge you to reconsider the closure of the Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, Alberta.

The case processing centre in Vegreville has been a cornerstone of the community for over 20 years. With 280 workers—about five percent of the town's population—it is one of the town's largest employers and vital to the local economy.

The closure will have a devastating impact on workers and their families, the Vegreville community, and the province of Alberta. This closure will kill jobs in the community, close businesses, devastate property values, and undermine the tax base—making it harder to operate hospitals, schools and other essential community services.

It is not realistic to expect workers to sell their homes and leave their communities, or fair to expect them to commute over 100 kilometres away to Edmonton to be able to keep the jobs they love and have held for years.

The Alberta Federation of Labour stands in solidarity with the affected workers in Vegreville and condemns this ill-advised decision.

I encourage you to work with Public Service Alliance of Canada, the employees at the centre and the local community to come up with a solution that will meet the government's goals in a way that will also benefit the workers and the community.

Sincerely,

Gil McGowan
President, Alberta Federation of Labour

c.c.   Shannon Strubbs, MP Lakeland
        Jessica Littlewood, MLA Fort Saskatchewan – Vegreville
        Myron Hayduk, Mayor, Vegreville
        Randy Boissonnault, MP Edmonton Centre
        Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
        Linda Duncan, MP Edmonton Strathcona
        Marianne Hladun, Prairies Regional VP, PSAC