



ALBERTA

JOBS, SKILLS, TRAINING AND LABOUR

Office of the Minister
MLA, Edmonton - Riverview

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July 16, 2015

Ms. Khrista Vogt
President
Medicine Hat and District Chamber of Commerce
413 - 6 Avenue SE
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 2S7

Dear Ms. Vogt:

Thank you for your May 29, 2015 email and letter regarding the increase to Alberta's minimum wage. I appreciate your concerns about the potential effects minimum wage increases could have on businesses, citizens and workers in Alberta. As Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour, responsible for employment standards including the minimum wage, I am pleased to respond.

I am pleased Ms. Lisa Kowalchuk, Executive Director of the Medicine Hat and District Chamber of Commerce, attended the June 11, 2015 stakeholder consultation. I trust she found the meeting informative and I appreciated her thoughtful participation in the discussions. We have also received Ms. Kowalchuk's June 15, 2015 minimum wage submission, summarizing your organization's perspective and recommendations for each of the three questions framing the consultation.

Our government promised to implement a fair minimum wage of \$15 per hour by 2018, and that is what we are going to do. As a first step, Alberta's minimum wage will increase by \$1 to \$11.20 per hour and the liquor server minimum wage will increase by \$1.50, from \$9.20 to \$10.70 per hour, effective October 1, 2015. The differential wage rate for liquor servers will be phased out completely in 2016.

Increasing the minimum wage is essential to helping low-income earners and families who struggle to meet their daily needs. The minimum wage in Alberta has fallen behind the earnings of Albertans in general. The Parkland Institute points out that Alberta has the highest average weekly earnings at \$29.24 per hour, yet the lowest general minimum wage of \$10.20. Also, we have the greatest income inequality in Canada. We must start bridging that gap.

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We are mindful of the possible effects minimum wage increases could have on workers and business owners in Alberta. As we plan the next increases between now and 2018, we will carefully analyze the effects of the increases and continue consulting with stakeholders, including your organization.

This increase is the first step in a four-year process to follow through on our commitment. We will ensure we provide businesses adequate time to make operational adjustments for each increase. For more information about Alberta's minimum wage, please visit www.work.alberta.ca/minimumwage.

The views that you have put forward are important to us as we carry out our responsibilities to the citizens of this province. As we develop our path forward we will continue to consider all perspectives on this issue.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lori Sigurdson".

Lori Sigurdson
Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education
Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour