

[Note: Deadline for submissions is December 22, 2020]

Email: NC-TFWP-APT-PTET-EPA-GD@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca

Cc: info@migrantworkersalliance.org

Re: Stakeholder Consultations on Mandatory Requirements for Employer-Provided Accommodations in the TFW Program

I am writing today on behalf of **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** in regards to Stakeholder Consultations on Mandatory Requirements for Employer-Provided Accommodations in the TFW Program. **[Write a little bit about your organizations' connection with migrant farmworkers].**

The creation of Minimum Accommodation Requirements for Primary Agriculture is a crucial step forward to ensure migrants live in decent and dignified housing. Nearly 1,600 migrant farmworkers have been infected by COVID-19 in Canada, and three have died. Migrant farmworkers are in crisis today. We strongly urge you to urgently implement improved guidelines as soon as possible, and in time for the 2021 farming season.

Migrant workers' experience has long demonstrated that temporary status under a tied work permit creates significant power imbalances in the employer and employee relationship that is unlike any other in Canada. Therefore these accommodation requirements must be accompanied by proactive enforcement mechanisms and anti-reprisals protections so that workers are able to enforce new rights.

We believe that the accommodation requirements as proposed do not meet the principles of worker self-determination, and humanity, dignity and decency that each of us deserve in a home. The accommodation requirements must be reformulated in a way that workers at each house are able to determine for themselves what their ideal home should be. The requirements must also pay close attention not just to housing workers, but ensuring all social and personal needs are met.

To this end, we completely support the [submissions by the Migrant Rights Network - Food and Farmworkers group based on input from over 450 migrant farmworkers](#). In particular, we call on you to revise the requirements to ensure:

1. Privacy: Worker housing must allow for privacy. This means that workers must have their own bedrooms, must not be forced to share kitchens and bathrooms with more than one person, and be able to easily spend time alone to recover from a long day's work.
2. Space: Migrant farm worker housing must include communal as well as private space, both indoor and outdoor, where they can relax during their spare time, watch TV, play sports, host guests, socialise and grow food. They must have storage space for their personal belongings, and have separate change rooms to be able to keep dirty and pesticide infested work clothes away from living spaces for cooking and resting.
3. Quality of life: Migrant workers must have laundry, kitchen, shower and bathroom facilities under one roof so they don't have to travel large distances between them. They must have clean drinking water, hot water for showers, heating in winter, and cooling in the summer. They want furniture and basic amenities (such as blenders, coffee makers, fridges and stoves etc) to be in good condition, and have access to phones and free internet. Workers must not be isolated or under employers' control: their homes must be away from workplaces and employers' homes, and closer to grocery stores, remittance services, health facilities and community.

4. Family unity: Migrant worker housing must allow for family reunification, and immigration laws must change to ensure full and permanent immigration status and family unity for all.
5. Worker control: Migrant workers want the freedom to choose when to be alone or in social spaces; to be quiet or loud; when to cook and where to eat; to live without employer surveillance or control over their movement or visitors; to choose when to eat or shower without having to negotiate with others. Migrant workers deserve the freedom to make choices in their housing, not live under the current institutionalized conditions.

Similar guidelines must be developed for other migrants in employer controlled housing, specifically live-in migrant caregivers.

We continue to reiterate that **all migrants in Canada should get permanent resident status and future migrants should be able to come to Canada with permanent residency status and their families**. This is the only way that decent housing and full and equal rights can be ensured.

Sincerely

NAME, ORGANIZATION, CONTACT INFORMATION