

The Honourable Elaine McCoy, QC  
Senator



L'honorable Elaine McCoy, CR  
Sénateur

Friday, May 18, 2017

His Worship Myron Hayduk  
Town of Vegreville  
4829 – 50 Street, Box 640  
Vegreville, Alberta T9C 1R7

RECEIVED  
MAY 26 2017  
TOWN OF VEGREVILLE

Your Worship,

RE: Vegreville Case Processing Centre

You reached out to Senator Doug Black with respect to the proposed closure of the Vegreville Case Processing Centre. Senator Black has been in correspondence with you as well, as I know he was looking into the issue on your behalf.

On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship happened to be in the Senate to answer questions posed by various senators. Since Senator Black was traveling outside of the capital region on public business that day, he asked me to pose a question to the Minister about the Vegreville Case Processing Centre. Attached you will find an excerpt from the Debates of the Senate, which includes an answer from the Minister. Unfortunately, we're only allowed to ask one question of each Minister, and so I was unable to follow up on any specifics with him. I therefore asked the Government Representative in the Senate to gather more details from the Minister and to report back to the Senate. As soon as we receive the Minister's response through the Government Representative, Senator Black and I will forward it on to you.

Sincerely,

Senator Elaine McCoy, QC  
Alberta Senator  
Facilitator, Independent Senators Group (ISG)

cc: Senator Doug Black, QC

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## Excerpt from Debates of the Senate (Hansard)

Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017

### Question Period

#### Vegreville Case Processing Centre

**Hon. Elaine McCoy:** I too welcome you to the Senate, minister, and it's a pleasure to see you again. I'd like to invite you to shift your focus to Alberta.

Alberta is my home province, and for many years now we've been very proud of hosting a regional data processing centre for your department. We were particularly proud that this centre was placed there by a politician who is greatly loved in Alberta, Don Mazankowski, when he was a minister of the Conservative government. It is placed in a rural town and was a move in the direction that we have always supported to diversify employment across our province and indeed across the country, to ensure that all Canadians have access to equal benefits.

In your very first year as a minister, I'm sorry to report — I'm sure you know — that your government is threatening to close this facility, notwithstanding that last year in your performance appraisal of the department, this facility was given the highest marks for efficiency.

So, minister, knowing that the town of Vegreville is working very hard in the community and with stakeholders and with, indeed, the Government of Canada to find solutions, our question to you, as senators from Alberta, is this: Can you give us assurances that you will look for solutions to our dilemma so that 10 per cent of that community is not left without jobs, in the same way that you have supported the refugees from elsewhere in the world?

**Hon. Ahmed D. Hussen, P.C., M.P., Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship:** Thank you very much, honourable senator, for that question. I must note here that it was Senator Harder, as deputy minister, who actually put that case processing centre in Alberta. I just wanted to point that out.

The Vegreville case processing centre is an important centre for our ministry. The workers there are very efficient. In fact, on many occasions, they've taken some overflow work from other offices, and they've been amazing in terms of lowering processing times for spousal applications and other forms of immigration applications.

I always repeat this: The decision to move towards consolidating services in Edmonton is in no way a reflection of the good work that is going on with the workers in Vegreville. The issue that we've always talked about is for the future. The Vegreville office presented particular challenges with respect to recruitment, bilingual staff and other challenges that were identified in an audit that was done on the office.

In order to recognize the value of those workers and make sure they continue to help us process cases, while at the same time dealing with the real challenges of recruitment, bilingualism and access to universities and mass transit that were lacking, we are moving to Edmonton but offering all the employees from the Vegreville case processing centre a job in Edmonton, which is one hour away.

URL: [https://sencanada.ca/en/content/sen/chamber/421/debates/114db\\_2017-05-02-e#76](https://sencanada.ca/en/content/sen/chamber/421/debates/114db_2017-05-02-e#76)



**Excerpt from Debates of the Senate (Hansard)**  
**Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

**Question Period**

**Vegreville Case Processing Centre**

**Hon. Elaine McCoy:** My question is also to the Honourable Government Representative in the Senate.

I was delighted to hear yesterday that you had a role in bringing the Case Processing Centre to Vegreville, Alberta, 23 years ago, and I appreciate the great value it has had to the people of Vegreville all these years. Unfortunately, as we know, we don't have the opportunity to ask supplementaries of ministers, so I am here today to ask you the supplementaries. If you would be so good as to ask him and give us his answers, I would greatly appreciate that.

The point of the matter is, however, closing this CPC, as we call it, is going to devastate Vegreville. Fifteen per cent of the municipal revenues will be gone if this centre is closed down. House prices are going to decline another 30 per cent, it is predicted, on top of the 17 per cent decline that has been caused by the global decline in oil prices.

The Town of Vegreville has been working very hard and has, in fact, come up with solutions to all of the challenges that the government has identified in their CPC. My question to this minister, through you, is: What is his department doing precisely? Are they working with the representatives from Vegreville, and what exactly are they doing with those representatives?

**Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate):** I thank the honourable senator for her question, and I will be happy to convey the specific question to the minister concerned and report back.

[*Translation*]

URL: [https://sencanada.ca/en/Content/Sen/Chamber/421/Debates/115db\\_2017-05-03-e#25](https://sencanada.ca/en/Content/Sen/Chamber/421/Debates/115db_2017-05-03-e#25)