

Town of Bonnyville

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POSTAL BAG 1006
BONNYVILLE, AB T9N 2J7
TELEPHONE: (780) 826-3496
FAX: (780) 826-4806
TOLL FREE 1-866-826-3496

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December 16, 2016

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

Dear Minister McCallum:

RE: CLOSURE OF IMMIGRATION CASE PROCESSING CENTRE IN VEGREVILLE

Council of the Town of Bonnyville, at their Regular Council Meeting of December 13, 2016 approved a motion to provide a Letter of Support to the Town of Vegreville to persuade the Federal Government, namely your Department, to keep the Case Processing Centre open in Vegreville.

The Town of Bonnyville strongly supports the Town of Vegreville's position that the Case Processing Centre remain in operation in the Town of Vegreville.

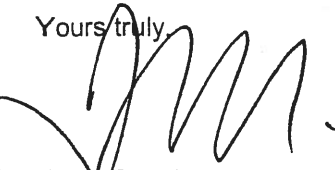
We are dismayed that it was the staff at the Case Processing Centre, who were advised of this move in their staff meeting and reached out to the Town of Vegreville for help and that this was not communicated to the Town by official means. To announce that a decision was already made not to renew the lease on the current building, a decision that affects 280 employees, without prior public consultation or consultation with the Town of Vegreville is deplorable and certainly indicates a very serious lack of government transparency.

It is Council's understanding that citizens from surrounding counties and municipalities are affected, as their citizens are employed at the Case Processing Centre. The big picture is that the Town of Vegreville has benefited for years from the increased tax base, employment, business attraction and introduction of programming that the Case Processing Centre has provided and this will be a serious blow to their economy.

Council also understands that the reasons given for the closure were that there would be more bi-lingual access, an increase in proximity to post-secondary education centers and that there was space in Crown owned or leased facilities. Council also understands that Council and the Mayor of Vegreville have notified you that they are more than open to discuss alternatives to the closure, from helping with lease negotiations to looking at alternative locations.

Again, Council of the Town of Bonnyville strongly objects to the closure of the Case Processing Centre in Vegreville and strongly supports the Case Processing Centre remaining operational in the Town of Vegreville.

Yours truly,


Gene Sobolewski
Mayor
Town of Bonnyville

cc: Myron Hayduk, Mayor, Town of Vegreville
Minister Judy Foote, Minister of Public Services and Procurement
Shannon Stubbs, MP, Two Hills Constituency
Jessica Littlewood, MLA, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville

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