



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
ALBERTA

October 19, 2017

Dr. David Swann, MLA

Calgary-Mountain View Constituency

Hon. Christina Gray
Minister of Labour
107 Legislature Building, 10800 97 Ave
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Gray:

I am writing to you about the need to address certain labour rules, regulations and practices in Alberta's agricultural sector.

First, there are significant concerns over the exemptions of mandatory rest periods and overtime for paid farm and ranch workers in Bill 17: *The Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act*, 2017, which I raised in the Assembly during the bill debate. No other employee in the province is expected to work for unregulated periods of time for base pay. These are unfair and dangerous practices that need to be stopped immediately.

In addition, I urge you to act on the Public Fatality Inquiry report by Justice A Brown on the death of farmworker Steven Murray Gibson, which recommended farm safety training be made a compulsory component of all post-secondary agricultural programs, as well as the need to develop and implement a compulsory regime of annual safety certification of farm equipment, including power take offs (PTOs).

Finally, in the wake of the two-year anniversary of the 3 children from the Bott family, who suddenly and tragically died as the result of farming accident, I am renewing my call for Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) officials to automatically investigate farm-related injuries or fatalities involving children.

I am not alone in my advocacy for the above changes; rather, they have been reinforced by the Farmworkers Union of Alberta, the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL), the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) and the Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA). These are important industry stakeholders who represent those who are directly affected.

Every worker in Alberta has the right to a safe and healthy work environment. By making this changes, your government can help to ensure fewer farm and ranch workers suffer serious injury or death while on the job.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Swann, MLA
Calgary-Mountain View
Alberta Liberal Opposition Leader

Cc. Honourable Oneil Carlier, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry