



**Press Release
For immediate release**

**PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION ON QUEBEC IMMIGRATION:
OLYMEL CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO RELAX ITS RULES AND REGIONALIZE ITS APPROACH**

Québec City, Wednesday, August 14, 2019 — As part of its participation today in the Parliamentary Commission on Citizen Relations regarding Quebec immigration planning for the 2020-2022 period, Olymel's management has argued that without the contribution of permanent and temporary economic immigrants, Quebec's regional economic prosperity and business growth would be seriously compromised. Olymel employs over 9,500 people in Quebec and has 25 facilities and many farms in 12 regions.

Olymel's management believes that the labour shortage, the lowest unemployment rate since 1976, and a particularly low population in the regions are factors making labour recruitment a daunting challenge. According to Olymel's brief, these factors are compounded by the complexity, slowness and prohibitive costs of foreign worker programs.

"This whole context is an untenable situation that jeopardizes expansion and development projects in Quebec. As a growing company, Olymel has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Quebec in recent years and has created 1,800 net jobs since 2017. Olymel still has 830 vacant positions to fill at the moment, and the labour shortage severely hampers our operations," said Paul Beauchamp, Olymel's First Vice President.

SIX URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT

Through six recommendations, Olymel representatives advocated for better coordination between candidate selection for economic immigration and the significant labour needs in Quebec's regions, as well as for greater consideration of employers' needs for unskilled workers. The company also wants the Government of Quebec to join with Quebec companies in calling on the federal government to completely review the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). Olymel's brief points out that, in recent years, in a major effort to promote immigration of French-speaking people, Olymel has organized numerous recruitment missions to Francophone countries, which significantly improves newcomers' integration in the regions. Finally, Olymel's management also proposes that the Government of Quebec become more involved with businesses, regional integration organizations and municipalities in order to find solutions to the housing and transportation issues preventing workers from settling in the regions.

Olymel's brief on immigration planning in Quebec for the 2020-2022 period was submitted to the Committee on Citizen Relations. The full version is available upon request and can be found on Olymel's website at the following address: <http://www.olytel.ca/en/news/>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Olymel asks the government to further support the regionalization of immigration. The regions' labour needs must be considered in permanent selection.
- 2) It is imperative that economic immigration thresholds (2020-2022) and economic immigration

programs take into account the specific needs for unskilled labour in the regions, the demographic context, unemployment rates and the number of vacant positions. The government must acknowledge the essential contribution of unskilled workers (who are more akin to semi-skilled workers at Olymel). It is important that it revise the list of trades under the skilled labour category or that it increase the unskilled labour thresholds.

- 3) The permanent selection of temporary foreign workers must be encouraged. It must consider unskilled labour needs on a permanent basis. Simplifying the process will reduce time and costs. The Government of Quebec must establish a program equivalent to the federal Agri-Food Immigration Pilot.
- 4) Olymel demands sustained and priority action by the Government of Quebec to join its voice to that of Quebec companies asking the federal government for a TFWP that is truly adapted to Quebec's regional and sectoral realities.
- 5) Olymel believes that Quebec must review and improve its TFWP management. It is essential to ease the requirements to accelerate the arrival of temporary foreign workers.
- 6) Olymel is asking the government to support, sustain and work more closely with businesses, community integration organizations in the regions and municipalities to address regional housing and transportation issues. Olymel is also asking the government to recognize for tax purposes the major investments Quebec companies made in recruitment and integration of immigrant employees.

ABOUT OLYMEL

Olymel is Canada's leader in the production, processing and distribution of pork and poultry meats. The company has made feeding the world its mission, which it pursues passionately with products of impeccable quality. The company employs over 14,000 people and has production and processing facilities in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan. Olymel exports nearly a third of its total sales. Its annual sales reach \$3.5 billion. The company markets its products mainly under the Olymel, Lafleur, Flamingo, Pinty's and Tour Eiffel brands.

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