

Robert Oliphant
Chair
Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration
131 Queen Street, Suite 6-36
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Oliphant:

I am writing today to present the Government of New Brunswick's observations to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, to contribute to your study on the federal government policies and guidelines regarding the medical inadmissibility of immigrants to Canada. On behalf of my government, I wish to thank the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration for the opportunity to provide input on this important issue.

As you know, the proposed amendments to the regulations and guidelines relate to excessive burden and are multi-faceted. They must take into account potential effects on social and healthcare costs, as well as the potential impacts on the recruitment of economic immigrants to New Brunswick. In other words, New Brunswick must balance the needs of its labour market with the social services needs of its residents.

According to 2014 data from the federal Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship regarding applications for permanent or temporary residence assessed on the basis of excessive burden on social and health care services, New Brunswick had fewer than five cases constituting an excessive burden. These cases would have resulted in costs totalling \$297,000 if the individuals had been admissible to Canada. This number is small compared to the other provinces and territories. However, making changes to the excessive burden policy could result in increased demand for social services and health care services by people who are currently inadmissible to Canada. Although it is difficult to determine the number of cases that would arise in the province if the excessive burden policy were completely eliminated, it is important to consider that changes to this policy could result in applications for permanent residence in New Brunswick from foreign nationals who have significant social and medical needs. To better understand the impact this would have on the province, New Brunswick would need to compile more data and consult on the possible outcomes of any changes.

New Brunswick's Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labor has partnered with other provincial departments that could be affected by changes to the excessive burden policy. Based on the limited information provided to provincial departments so far, it is difficult to determine what impact eliminating the excessive burden policy would have on New Brunswick's social services and health care services.

Once again, thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on this important issue. I look forward to the findings of the Standing Committee's study on the medical inadmissibility of immigrants to Canada.

Yours sincerely,

Gilles Lepage
Minister of Labour, Employment and Population Growth
Government of New Brunswick