

Coalition of BC Businesses

April 26, 2011
The Vancouver Sun
Letters to the Editor
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Dear Editor,

RE: "Are there too many foreign workers?" April 20, 2011

How refreshing and remarkable to read the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives defending a free market solution for wages (RE: Are there too many foreign workers?). But it's hard to believe the gesture is sincere when this group calls for higher government controlled minimum wage rates in the same breath.

David Green is wrong to assume that unfilled jobs are attributable to low wage rates repelled by Canadians. Take a trip to Fort McMurray, Alberta where quick service restaurant workers are paid over \$20 per hour and there is still a labour shortage. In some BC communities and occupations, jobs are paid well above the minimum wage rate yet positions go unfilled.

Labour shortages appear in certain occupations and regions where it is difficult to attract Canadian workers. The solution is to open the doors to foreign workers who can fill those positions and earn a good living for themselves and their families back home.

Green offers up no evidence to support what he describes as "an underclass of workers with tenuous labour rights." He neglects to mention that foreign worker wages are set by the federal government based on a prevailing wage formula by occupation, which are on the high side of average wages and much higher than minimum wage.

The temporary foreign worker program has provided much needed labour certainty that has enabled many employers to open businesses and keep them open which creates and protects Canadian jobs and investment. Closing the doors and sending foreign workers back to their country of origin would rob thousands of them and their families the opportunity to improve their quality of life.

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