

Standing Committee on Human Resources Nova Scotia House of Assembly

Re: Work Permit Extensions for Provincial Nominee Program Candidates

Submitted by NS Promise | May 28, 2026

I. Nature of This Submission

NS Promise is an independent civic initiative with no political affiliation. This submission is made in the public interest on behalf of 1,440 temporary foreign workers and 40 employers across 21 municipalities in Nova Scotia. It identifies a specific, documented labour and administrative failure currently unfolding in this province and advances a single, targeted request for provincial action. This submission is being brought forward at this early stage precisely because of the immediate and ongoing nature of the harm — permits are lapsing and workers are being displaced every month that passes without a response.

II. The Affected Population

The individuals represented by this submission arrived in Nova Scotia lawfully, pursuant to valid work authorizations. They subsequently sought permanent status through established provincial pathways, namely the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) and the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP). In most cases the NSNP and AIP require a minimum of one year of provincial work experience before an application may be submitted. Every person whose situation is documented in this submission had therefore already lived and worked in Nova Scotia, contributing to its labour market and tax base, before they were legally eligible to apply.

Their applications were submitted. They entered the provincial queue. They have waited, in many cases for two, three, and in some instances more than that. The majority of applicants did not receive any decision or acknowledgment of their file. In other cases, applicants received a file number, an officer was assigned, and in some instances supporting documents were requested — after which no further communication was received. Eventually, with the introduction of the annual file expiry amendment, their applications were expired from the pool without a decision ever being rendered.

During that period of administrative inaction, their work permits have lapsed or are in the process of lapsing. They have not been found inadmissible. They have not been refused. They have simply been left in the queue while the clock on their status ran out. The overwhelming majority of these individuals are in their prime working years — under 35, trained, and fully integrated into their workplaces and communities across this province. They are not on the margins of Nova Scotia's economy. They are part of its foundation.

III. The Administrative Failure

This submission does not ask the Committee to make immigration policy. It asks the Committee to recognize that a systemic failure of administration is producing outcomes that no reasonable interpretation of provincial policy intended.

The NSNP and AIP were created to address labour shortages by attracting and retaining skilled workers in Nova Scotia. Workers who followed that pathway in good faith, who met all eligibility requirements, and who have been waiting years for a processing decision now face loss of status — not as the result of a considered refusal, but as the mechanical consequence of permit expiry during a processing backlog. The province has not said no to these workers. The province has not said anything. While these workers stood by the province, took on essential roles, paid taxes, and helped local businesses grow, they are now left feeling abandoned by the very system that invited them here.

This is where the matter demands direct attention: administrative inaction is not a neutral outcome. When a file expires from the pool without a decision, and a worker loses status as a consequence, the system has made a decision — it has simply made it without saying so. Allowing permits to lapse and then treating the resulting loss of status as an administrative inevitability is, in practical effect, a policy of removal by attrition. That is not what these programs were designed to produce, and it is not an outcome that reflects well on the integrity of the process.

Every person in this queue is entitled to a response — accepted or refused. These individuals chose Nova Scotia based on the requirements and timelines outlined by Nova Scotia's immigration programs at the time they applied. They made life-altering decisions in reliance on those representations. A formal application process that results in neither a decision nor communication is not an outcome any program was designed to produce. This submission advances that position not as a legal claim but as a matter of basic administrative fairness that the Committee is well placed to address.

IV. The Data

This data was collected within one week of launching a structured community petition. The petition remains open and the numbers continue to grow. This submission is being made at this early stage because the urgency of the situation does not allow for delay — workers are losing status now, across this province, every month.

Workers signed	1,440 across 21 Nova Scotia municipalities
Employers signed	40, collectively employing 1,359 staff independent of the workers signed above
Combined reach	Workers signed and employer-reported affected staff together represent a figure approaching nearly double the worker petition alone — two distinct populations, both directly impacted
Sectors at risk	Security, construction, healthcare, trucking, food service, and retail — trained, experienced workers integrated into Nova Scotia's workforce and communities
Geographic spread	21 municipalities across Nova Scotia including Halifax, Dartmouth, Sackville, Bedford, Sydney, Truro, and communities across multiple provincial ridings — the impact of inaction will be felt broadly, not concentrated in one area
Data collection	Seven days — these figures represent an early snapshot. The full affected population is substantially larger

A full community data report has been compiled and is available upon request. Should the Committee wish to have it presented directly, NS Promise welcomes that opportunity and can be reached at

nspromise.info@gmail.com or through www.nspromise.ca. The report includes detailed sector breakdowns, geographic distribution across ridings and municipalities, permit expiry timelines by month, queue wait time analysis, and direct employer submissions documenting the workforce disruption already underway. Employers across the affected sectors report that these are trained, experienced members of their workforce — people who cannot simply be replaced — whose loss creates genuine hardship for businesses that depend on them.

V. The Precedent: Manitoba 2024

In 2024, the Province of Manitoba faced an identical situation. Workers with active Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP) applications were losing status while their files awaited processing decisions. The Manitoba government formally requested that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) create a temporary public policy offering two-year work permit extensions to eligible MPNP candidates. IRCC approved that request. The policy was implemented in September 2024, extended in April 2025, and protected approximately 6,700 workers.

The mechanism is proven. The federal government has demonstrated its willingness to act on such a request. Nova Scotia is not being asked to pioneer a solution. It is being asked to follow one that worked.

VI. The Request

NS Promise respectfully requests that the Committee take the following three steps:

1. Acknowledge this submission as part of the official committee record.
2. Forward this submission to the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration and request that the Minister provide a formal written response regarding whether a request to IRCC for a temporary public policy mirroring the Manitoba model is warranted and achievable for NSNP and AIP candidates who have been residing in Nova Scotia for a minimum of 12 continuous months, with priority given to those who applied earliest and have been waiting longest. This residency threshold ensures the policy protects those already genuinely rooted in Nova Scotia and does not create an incentive for new interprovincial movement specifically to access the measure.
3. Invite NS Promise to appear before the Committee at a future meeting to present its full community data and respond to members' questions.

This ask is targeted and bounded. It does not seek to increase immigration levels or introduce new pathways. It seeks to keep in Nova Scotia the people who are already here — workers who have spent years contributing to our communities, our healthcare system, our construction sector, and our economy. This is not an ask to invite anyone new. It is an ask to keep the people Nova Scotia already has, who are already integrated, already employed, and already part of this province, from being removed through administrative inaction rather than a considered decision. This will not only serve the workers and applicants in this situation but also the employers who have invested in building an experienced workforce — many of whom have already lost staff or are on the verge of losing them, creating real and lasting hardship for businesses across Nova Scotia that depend on these individuals to operate.

Nova Scotia has the opportunity to act with the same resolve that Manitoba demonstrated in 2024. The path is clear. The mechanism is available. The community is waiting — and it is counting on this province to honour the

promise that brought them here.

Respectfully submitted,

NS Promise Board

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NS Promise is an independent, non-partisan civic initiative. It is not affiliated with any political party, government body, or immigration advocacy organization. All data presented in this submission was collected through a structured community petition with signed consent from each participant.