



COMPUTER ANIMATION STUDIOS OF ONTARIO



CASO is a non-partisan, not-for-profit industry association committed to the growth and international competitiveness of Ontario's animation and visual effects industry, through advocacy, professional development, and marketing initiatives.

The Canadian Media Producers Association is the national association of independent producers, representing over 600 Canadian companies engaged in the development, production, and distribution of content made for television, cinema, and digital media. The majority of members are Ontario-based companies. The CMPA works to promote the continued success of the Canadian production sector and to ensure the diverse content made by our members reaches audiences at home and around the world.

May 17, 2022

The Hon. Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1A 1L1

Dear Minister Fraser,

Canada is recognized as a world leader in the visual effects (VFX) and animation industry. Within Canada, Ontario is a leading jurisdiction for domestic and international screen/streaming content, along with Vancouver, and Montreal.

Ontario's industry volumes have grown continuously and significantly – even throughout the COVID pandemic – due to the excellence of our work and workforce and significant investments to pivot to work-from-home. ¹ In fact, 92% of VFX and animation studios are experiencing high growth. The media production industry is a significant economic contributor and has high-value jobs. In 2019, the industry accounted for \$9.3 billion in total production volume and more than 180,000 jobs across the country. VFX and animation are key to supporting the broader film and television production sector.

In recent years, the industry has seen a huge surge in opportunities to meet a global demand for content. This demand for content has accelerated even more during COVID. Companies that were struggling to address staffing gaps to meet the demand for content prior to the pandemic have seen this situation exacerbated to what is now a critical labour shortage.

To meet demand and enhance opportunities for workers, companies continue to invest in advanced in-house training, outreach to schools, and especially to equity and sovereignty-seeking communities, in

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order to secure and develop sufficient domestic talent to meet demand and to advance diversity and inclusion in the workforce. The industry seeks to work with all levels of government to enable Canadians as early as high-school to build awareness of the opportunities available in the industry and to ensure that training and education will align with industry needs.

However, the increased growth in demand and the addition of several large international companies establishing studios in Ontario have created a critical labour shortage that affects our ability to not only service this high volume of work, but to maintain our market position as well. Ontario studios need to recruit significant levels of top talent from across Canada and other jurisdictions around the world in order to deliver and meet demand.

While we continue to invest in the development of domestic talent, the available workforce simply does not meet demand. Currently, multiple studios are being forced to turn down opportunities as labour demands cannot be met. This challenge exists across the country. We are aware that industry leaders from BC have also written to you with similar concerns.

We are writing to request an expedited immigration pathway for the VFX and animation industry in order to attract global talent into Canada to benefit Ontario companies and employers in the timeline that the sector and clients require.

There are limitations to the existing Global Talent Stream program, including the differences in processing times for Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIA) and delays in negotiating Labour Market Benefit plans.

Given the extreme state of the talent shortage, we propose the following adjustments and inclusions to the LMIA Policy:

- A 10-day Work Permit processing time for candidates.
- Applies to VFX for projects regardless where they were filmed, and to CG and animated programs.
- Appropriate education diploma/certificate or equivalent experience
- Include NOCs
 - 5241 – graphic designers + illustrators
 - 5131- producers, directors, choreographers, + related occupations
 - 0512- managers – publishing, motions pictures, broadcasting, + performing arts
 - 2173- software engineers + designers
 - 2174- computer programmers + interactive media developers

This could be implemented as a pilot program, as was done in the IT Labour Market Opinion (LMO) exemption from 2010 to 2014, which added Digital Media Occupations to the IT LMO exemption.

Outcomes would include

- Immediately generating exponential high value job creation for Canadian workers across the country, and
- Protecting Canada's international reputation as a lead jurisdiction for VFX and animation.

We appreciate the Canadian government's significant partnership role in the international reputation and continued growth of this thriving industry in Ontario and Canada. Expediting an immigration pathway for the VFX and animation industry will enable continued exponential growth to meet the incredible international demand.

We look forward to an opportunity to meet virtually and continue to work together to build on this success.

Respectfully,



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cc:

The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

The Hon. Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Labour

The Hon. Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Canadian Heritage

The Hon. Mary Ng, Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development