

[NAME]
[TITLE]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY], [PROVINCE] [POSTAL CODE]

January XX, 2021

Dear XXX,

On behalf of [Province Name]'s fresh fruit and vegetable sector, we would like to express our thanks for your government's tireless work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We greatly appreciate your government's recognition of our sector as essential and the support provided to protect workers and to keep the fresh produce supply chain running. Your commitment is crucial in ensuring that Canadian families can continue to put our safe, healthy, and nutritious products on their tables throughout this crisis and afterwards.

As the pandemic continues to impact us, [PROVINCE NAME] can still count on our food supply chain workers to be on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response. With that in mind, we would like to emphasize the critical nature of the fresh fruit and vegetable sector to ensure food security and urge your government to take this into consideration when prioritizing access to vaccination for COVID-19. As a complementary measure, we also request that your government work to ensure the availability of rapid testing for essential workers in our sector (e.g. on-farm, packhouses, food distribution).

Now that a number of vaccines for COVID-19 have been developed and approved, it is crucial that it be available to all Canadians, with vaccine prioritization among key population groups. We therefore ask that essential fruit and vegetable sector workers and all other food sector workers be considered as one of these key prioritized groups.

Health Canada's *Preliminary Guidance on key populations for early COVID-19 immunization*¹ highlights the prioritization of the key groups included in the following paragraph:

*The guidance considers prioritizing four groups: 1) Those at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19; 2) those most likely to transmit COVID-19 to those at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 and workers essential to maintaining the COVID-19 response; **3) those contributing to the maintenance of other essential services for the functioning of society; and 4) those whose living or working conditions put them at elevated risk of infection and where infection could have disproportionate consequences, including Indigenous communities.***

As described in Health Canada's guidance, we strongly support prioritizing vaccination for key population groups and believe that food sector workers should be designated among "those contributing to the maintenance of essential services for the functioning of society".

¹ Health Canada. *Preliminary guidance on key populations for early COVID-19 immunization*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci.html>

During these unprecedented times, it is essential that we ensure the continuity of [PROVINCE NAME]'s food supply, especially fresh fruits and vegetables known to be a key part of healthy eating. Prioritizing vaccinations amongst food sector workers is critical, not only to the health of these essential workers, but also to ensuring that agricultural and food supply chains can continue to operate to the benefit of all Canadians.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

XXX