



TEAMALBERTA

ADVANCING ALBERTA'S CROP SECTOR TO 2025 AND BEYOND

Team Alberta requests extension to the March 1, 2019 mandatory Class 1 driver training deadline

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 6, 2019

Changes that affect obtaining a Class 1 driver's license are coming March 1, 2019 and Team Alberta is requesting that the Government of Alberta consult with the agriculture sector and establish a reasonable deadline to avoid unintended consequences for farmers who are dependent on seasonal labour.

These changes will require any person who wants to obtain a Class 1 driver's licence to take the Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT) Program. Many farmers are highly dependent on seasonal labour that requires a Class 1 licence and much of that labour is hired and trained immediately prior to the spring planting season. This could significantly impact many farmers' ability hire properly trained and licensed drivers prior seeding the 2019 crop.

The existing provincial shortage of skilled labour in this area, combined with changes to the privately-run licensing bodies, including re-training and re-testing of instructors and examiners, means that training programs are difficult to get into.

"Team Alberta supports safer and more highly skilled drivers operating on our roads and highways, says Hannah Konschuh, Alberta Wheat Commission Vice-Chair from Cluny. "But the timelines and lack of consultation with farmers would make it virtually impossible to comply with new regulations by the deadline. Additionally, there doesn't seem to have been an increase in the training capacity to accommodate this big change."

"We fully support the need for proper training and safety on our roads and highways," said Kevin Serfas, Vice-Chair of Alberta Canola from Turin, Alberta "We get where this came from, our Board meeting after Humboldt was very emotional as my family and others in Alberta Canola had direct connections to players on that team."

"These regulations will have an immediate impact on farms in the short-term if they don't already have Class 1 drivers in place for this year," said Dave Bishop, Chair of Alberta Barley.

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Team Alberta is a collaborative initiative led by four of the province's crop commissions. Our commissions are producer elected, directed and funded organizations established to represent the interests of our producers across the province.



“Longer-term, we need to ensure there is appropriate training for the increasing number of farms that rely on Class 1 drivers and their ability to attract them to agriculture.”

“There is already a shortage of skilled labour in agriculture and these changes in regulations will make access to labour increasingly more difficult for this crop year,” said Don Shepert, Alberta Pulse Growers Chair. “We ask the government to work with us so we can seed our crops and comply with necessary training requirements.”

For more information on the mandatory Class 1 training regulation visit:
<https://www.alberta.ca/commercial-driver-training.aspx>.

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