



January 25, 2021

Her Worship Sandra Masters
Mayor of Regina
PO Box 1790
Regina, SK S4P 3C8
mayor@regina.ca

His Worship Charlie Clark
Mayor of Saskatoon
222 Third Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5
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Re: Potential Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) facility expansion

Dear Madam Mayor and Mr. Mayor,

On behalf of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce (SCC), I am writing in support of the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization – International Vaccine Centre’s (VIDO-InterVac) proposal to expand and upgrade their facilities in Saskatoon, at the University of Saskatchewan.

VIDO is a global leader in human and animal infectious disease research and vaccine development. They rapidly respond to emerging infectious diseases and have been making a worldwide impact for 45 years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they were the first in Canada to isolate the virus, develop an animal model, and get a vaccine into animal testing.

VIDO is home to one of North America’s largest containment level 2 and 3 vaccine infectious disease research institutes. Additionally, VIDO-InterVac is one of Canada’s only research facilities with containment level 3 large animal capacity and it is one of the largest and most advanced level 3 containment facilities in the world. Collaborators and visiting scientists from around the world apply to use VIDO-InterVac’s specialized capacity here in Saskatchewan. The SCC recognized VIDO-InterVac last November at our ABEX ceremony, where they were the recipient of our Export Award.

Scientists agree that “three diseases emerge annually, and every three years one of them will lead to a larger pandemic.” As we have seen, pandemics can devastate lives and livelihoods. Therefore, getting ahead of infectious diseases through research is imperative to limiting their impact. Being prepared and able to immediately respond to emerging diseases is essential moving forward. Dr. Gerdtz (DVM), director and CEO of VIDO-InterVac, said, “to be nimble and quick in vaccine development, three key things are needed—in-house access to high-containment laboratory space, vaccine manufacturing capability, and a wide range of readily accessible animal models for pre-clinical testing of vaccines and therapeutics” and that if this approach “had been in place here at the start of this pandemic, we’d be at least six months further ahead with our vaccine.”

Expanding VIDO’s capacity towards becoming Canada’s Centre for Pandemic Research would allow VIDO to produce up to 40 million vaccine doses per year and to continue delivering their expertise, growing their team, drawing specialists to Saskatoon, gaining international recognition for Saskatchewan, and protecting Canada and the world from infectious diseases.



Thank you for your attention to this matter. The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce would be pleased to provide further comment at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve McLellan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'S' being particularly large and stylized.

Steve McLellan

CEO, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce

CC: The Honourable Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan
Honourable Paul Merriman, Minister of Health
Dr. Peter Stoicheff, President, University of Saskatchewan