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## Media Release-November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 MELT Program Provides Support for Drivers

Taber, AB –

The Government of Alberta announced some programs today to help ensure that food can be transported in a safe manner to all Albertans while helping ensure there are enough drivers to deliver it. As an industry that relies on truck drivers to deliver the raw product and the refined sugar to the consumer, we rely on having a skilled workforce. The steps announced today by the government will help ensure that we have access to a safe and skilled labor pool that will continue to provide food security to Albertans.

“Highway safety is important to every Albertan, but especially so in rural areas where we drive to our fields, medical appointments, and for groceries. That is why we have always believed in the MELT program and never wanted an exemption. We just needed to find a way to make the cost of completing the program more accessible for Albertans and to provide some recognition for industry experience,” says Gary Tokariuk, President of the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers. “The measures announced today by the Minister of Transportation, find that balance by providing Class 3 drivers with the recognition of years of driving. This has been one of our requests from the beginning and we are thankful the government listened to the industry.”

The Alberta Sugar Beet Growers works for 200 local farm families that grow the sweetest crop in Alberta, sugar beets. As the last place in Canada where sugar beets are grown and refined into 100% Canadian sugar, it is imperative that truck drivers be available to haul both the raw and end product. Advocacy for these farmers is just one of the many roles that the organization plays to ensure industry sustainability.

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