《1300多名中国富翁起诉加拿大取消投资移民》

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More than 1,300 Chinese mainland millionaires have decided to take Canada's immigration authorities to court after Ottawa's decision to terminate its popular immigrant investor program earlier this year, which had previously attracted worldwide entrepreneurs and investors to Canada.

According to South China Morning Post, each applicant is seeking C$5million ($4.57 million) in compensation (2.5 times of the application deposit) if the government refuses to assess their cases. According to Tim Leahy, the Toronto lawyer representing the case, 1,335 of his 1,446 clients had submitted their immigration applications in Hong Kong. Virtually all of the Hong Kong applicants are from Chinese mainland.

Canada's 25-year-old federal Immigrant Investor Program (IIP) has offered a way for many rich foreigners to buy their tickets to Canada's educational benefits and health plan, based on the condition that they have a net worth of C$1.6-million or more and were able to lend Ottawa C$800,000 interest-free for five years.

Although the government planned to call off the program in February, the program was actually slowed down by the immigration authorities about two years ago for further movement.

According to South China Morning Post, lawyer Leahy claimed that "the immigration authorities unfairly slowed the processing of applications well ahead of its cancellation".

Immigration data shows that more than 60,000 would-be migrants were suspended in the program's backlog, and many of them had paid their C$2million application deposit over a year ago. Among the applicants, over 80 percent had lodged their applications via Hong Kong.

Leahy's clients also include a small share of applicants from Ankara, London, New Delhi, Paris, Port-of-Spain, Pretoria and Singapore, besides those applying via Hong Kong.

Prior to the case, a small group of 10 applicants in Beijing had filed a group lawsuit against Canada's immigration authorities in March, and one of them reportedly had already bought a million-dollar house in Vancouver.