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February 28, 2018.

Aidan Grove-White
Manager
Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Ontario Growth Secretariat
Partnerships and Consultation Branch
777 Bay St.
c/o Business Management Division
Floor 17
Toronto, ON
M5G 1Z3

Dear Minister,

EBR 013-2016: Proposed Methodology for Land Needs Assessment for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) is an Accredited Farm Organization representing the interests of over 4,000 farm families in Ontario.

The CFFO supports the goal of setting intensity targets in the Land Needs Assessment process for the Greater Golden Horseshoe region. These will help to ensure our settlement areas intensify within their current boundaries, and limit sprawl into rural areas. This helps to protect our valuable farmland which is found throughout the region, often abutting current settled areas.

It is important that municipalities consider the province's the Agricultural Systems mapping before they make decisions about where settlement areas will expand. Municipalities need to choose sites on land that is less suitable for farming and will not jeopardize the viability of surrounding farm businesses.

Land use planning is a vital process for protecting the integrity of key resources, natural and cultural, for the benefit of all Ontarians. Protecting our limited farmland as farmland in the long-term benefits farmers, now and into the future. It also benefits all Ontarians to have this valuable resource of food-producing land protected and at easy access to the eating population. Protection of our dependable productive farmland is vital across the province, but especially in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region.

The GGH region is home to two specialty crop areas, significant high-quality farmland throughout the region, suitable climate and microclimate conditions, established transportation, farming and food processing infrastructure, a burgeoning local food

THE GENERAL FARM ORGANIZATION THAT IS ROOTED IN FAITH & GUIDED BY VALUES



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culture and a significant consumer population—all of which support agriculture. However, these cannot be taken for granted. Without proper planning, protection and support, development pressures put many of these assets at risk. There are also new opportunities in this region for agriculture, and forward-looking planning must keep these in mind as well.

The proposed Methodology for Land Needs Assessment sets intensity targets for existing settled areas, new settlement area expansions and especially around transit stations. While these targets make for more efficient access to infrastructure, such as public transportation, it also encourages better use of existing settled areas and curbs sprawl in new settled areas. These targets will also help to protect farmland and limit sprawl into greenfields and rural areas.

The CFFO expects that the Agricultural System mapping within the GGH region will also help municipalities to appropriately direct any settlement area expansions away from prime agricultural land (especially classes 1-3 or the best 3 classes of land within the municipality). It is vital that when municipalities must make decisions about where to accommodate population growth, that the importance of farmland and the viability of existing farm businesses is considered. As can be seen in areas such as the Region of Waterloo, with good planning and clear boundaries, farms and urban populations can be mutually beneficial neighbours.

Living in smaller housing units closer together is a cultural shift for many Canadians. Once these guidelines are established, it is important that protocols are in place to ensure they are properly enforced and that our productive farmland is protected.

We appreciate this opportunity to respond to these proposed methodology guidelines and thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Clarence Nywening, President
Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
SA