



November 28, 2022

Hon. Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

Farmers and farm organizations understand the province's need for more homes to help keep pace with our increasing population. We support the government's stated goal of building more houses for Ontarians but proposing to rezone thousands of acres of farmland, both in the Greenbelt and near other urban areas, is a change that's of serious concern to the farm and agri-food sector. Rural and agricultural communities in Ontario need more labour, and we want to retain our youth in our rural communities and they in turn need houses too. But once farmland is lost to development, it is gone forever.

We recognize that the balancing act between farmland protection and further urbanization doesn't come with a quick or easy answer and that the issues facing us today are complex. However, Ontario's limited supply of farmland is a scarce resource, making up less than five percent of all the land in the province. It's vital that Ontario has a strong, viable and sustainable supply of food products grown, harvested and processed right here at home.

Farmland losses are already at a rapid pace. The current rate of loss is measured at 319 acres per day in our province, according to the 2021 Census of Agriculture. These losses are not sustainable and will become increasingly worse with the overreaching effects of Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*.

Agriculture and food in Ontario is a major economic driver contributing \$47 billion annually to the provincial economy and employing nearly one million Ontarians through skilled labour, trades, technology, innovation and more.

The loss of thousands of acres of agricultural land has the potential to jeopardize our domestic supply chain and local food production. The impact will be felt on consumers today and for future generations.

With a responsible land use planning approach, we believe it is possible to build complete communities that can provide for the needs of residents while minimizing sprawl, preventing the loss of farmland, and avoiding additional pressures on urban-rural boundaries.

The key is a collaborative approach to responsible long-term land use planning that balances meeting housing needs and supporting economic growth with protecting agricultural land.

Sincerely,



Peggy Brekveld  
President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture



Ed Scharringa  
President, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario



Max Hansgen  
President, National Farmers Union - Ontario

cc: Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs  
Rob Flack, Parliamentary Assistant to Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs  
Trevor Jones, Parliamentary Assistant to Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs  
Hon. Steven Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Kevin Holland, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Michael Parsa, Associate Minister Municipal Affairs and Housing