



The Honourable Ernie Hardeman
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
11th Floor
77 Grenville St.
Toronto, ON
M5S 1B3

December 21, 2020

Dear Minister Hardeman:

The Perth County Federation of Agriculture (PCFA) represents the unique farming interests of Perth County farmers. After 75 years, we are proud to represent over 1,800 farming families in Perth County. PCFA believes the protection of prime agricultural land for agricultural use is of paramount importance.

As of 2016, Census data indicates that Perth County contains 518,023 Acres of farmland, over 4% of the farmland in Ontario. Ontario agricultural lands occupy less than 5% of the province's overall land area and our agricultural lands are a finite and shrinking resource that all Ontarians benefit from, not only for the ability of these lands to provide us with a secure supply of safe, affordable and environmentally sustainable food, fibre and fuel but also for the concurrent environmental and ecological goods and services that all Ontarians derive from our agricultural lands. In alphabetical order, these include; aesthetic and recreational space, air quality (including oxygen production), biodiversity, carbon sequestration, climate change mitigation, nutrient cycling, pollination services, soil erosion control, water cycling (purification, retention, flood mitigation, groundwater recharge), and wildlife and endangered species habitat.

The Perth County Federation of Agriculture (PCFA) has had concerns brought forward to our board by some of our members, about the development of agricultural lands for non-agricultural purposes within Perth County. The most recent example was highlighted by the use of a Ministerial Zoning Order (MZO). The lack of planning procedure has left PCFA members close to the proposed development with many unanswered questions and concerns about the impact on their farming operations. This is a situation where an Agricultural Impact Assessment would have been beneficial for the agriculture community in Perth County, to assess the ramifications of the proposed development. The PCFA would like to encourage the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs to mandate that Agricultural Impact Assessments be used for all proposed agricultural land changes to non-agricultural zoning. The use of MZO's to change land from agriculture to non-agriculture is against the policy of PCFA. We believe it is important for OMAFRA to support our position. The protection of agricultural lands is important to all the citizens of Ontario.

Sincerely,

Tim Halliday.
President, PCFA

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