



April 14, 2023

Dear Premier Doug Ford,

I, on behalf of the Ontario Farmland Trust, am writing to you today to express our organization's concern about the future of Ontario's agri-food system. As you may be aware, Ontario farmland is being lost at 319 acres per day, a tragic loss given the limited amount of prime farmland in the province. Equally concerning is the projection that 40% of Canadian farmers are going to retire in the next 10 years. These are significant concerns. Not only are we losing the knowledge and expertise of our farmers, the next generation of farmers may not have the land base and resources needed to provide a sustainable and prosperous agricultural sector and local food supply.

A robust agricultural sector is the foundation that ensures resiliency of our communities. It plays a critical role in food supply, economies, and ecological services critical for adapting to impending climate challenges. Food production and a secure society are inextricably linked. However, we are at a critical moment where the future of our agricultural system is at stake.

I am urging you to pay attention to this risk to our society and to take immediate action to protect agriculture and invest in farmers.

Farmland needs better protection. The path of permitting urban sprawl on farmland should not be taken lightly, as this will have long-lasting impacts on the availability and quality of our food supply.

It is crucial that we protect an agricultural systems approach to land use planning. This means ensuring that farmland is used for agricultural purposes and not converted for other uses. By protecting our farmland, we can ensure that we have a reliable and sustainable source of food for future generations.

The future of agriculture needs you to think and act for the long-term by investing in the next generation of farmers. Food production and equitable distribution is what allows civilizations to remain resilient.

The Ontario Farmland Trust would welcome an opportunity to present how we are uniquely positioned to help. These are big challenges and we must face them in a collaborative manner. There are opportunities and new pathways that can be explored to assist young farmers with education, training, land access, housing, and financial



support. Now is the time for innovative solutions from a range of stakeholders willing to collaborate to tackle the complex issues we are facing.

The future of Ontario's agri-food system is at stake, and we cannot afford to delay action any longer. Immediate action is needed to protect our farmland, invest in farmers, and support the next generation of farmers.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Straathof", is positioned above the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Martin Straathof  
Executive Director  
Ontario Farmland Trust