

Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs

Office of the Minister

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Ministère de l'Agriculture, de
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April 16, 2024

His Worship Dan O'Mara
Municipality of Temagami
dan.omara@temagami.ca

Dear Mayor O'Mara:

It has been brought to my attention that some municipalities in the province have implemented new stormwater fee structures, and others are exploring doing so.

As Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, I am writing to ask that your municipality considers the needs and potential impacts on agriculture in your community when evaluating proposed changes to stormwater or other fees and to offer any support that my ministry can provide as you fully consider the impacts.

As you know, Ontario farms contribute significantly to local economies while supporting access to high-quality food both domestically and globally. The agri-food sector employs over 836,000 people and contributed \$48.8 billion to our provincial economy. Our government is committed to supporting the growth of the agriculture and food industry, which is why we released [Grow Ontario: a provincial agri-food strategy](#) to strengthen the agri-food sector, support economic growth, and ensure an efficient, reliable and responsive food supply for Ontarians.

To ensure that our food supply system continues to be responsible, trusted, and competitive on the world stage as well as a driver for economic growth in Ontario, it is important that all levels of government work closely with the agricultural community when evaluating new policies.

There is a need for special consideration for agricultural properties to ensure there are no unintended consequences that disproportionately impact farmers or greenhouse operators, as demonstrated in several of the new stormwater utility programs, including Brant County's proposed Stormwater Utility Program, which will exempt agricultural properties from the new proposed fee.

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It is also worth noting that many farmers have already invested in water management measures and may not utilize municipal waterways in the same manner as other businesses.

Staff at my ministry are available to provide guidance on supporting the growth of the agricultural community while balancing broader municipal needs. Please feel free to contact Scott Duff with any questions you may have at (519) 820-3331 or by email at scott.duff@ontario.ca.

I hope that your municipality will consider engaging more directly with farmers and greenhouse operators to mitigate any unintended impacts new charges may have. It is imperative that municipalities and the agricultural industry work together to ensure the economic prosperity of our rural communities now and well into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa M. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" and last name "Thompson" clearly distinguishable.

Lisa M. Thompson
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

c: Scott Duff, Director, Policy Division

Did you know about the Farmers' Wellness Initiative?

- Your mental health is important! If you're a farmer or a member of a farm family and in need of mental health support, please call 1-866-267-6255 and arrange to speak with a professional today.
- For additional resources visit: <https://farmerwellnessinitiative.ca/>.