



**Ontario Federation of Agriculture**

**Ontario AgriCentre**

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February 23, 2011

The Honourable Rick Bartolucci  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
777 Bay Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON  
M5G 2E5

Dear Minister Bartolucci:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for meeting with me on February 9, 2011. I greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet with you to outline our policy positions with respect to some key issues.

As I mentioned during the meeting, it is important to have adequately-funded municipal governments. The OFA supports in principal the request made by various municipalities that the Ontario government provide full provincial reimbursement for the amounts previously provided under the farmland property tax rebate program and the managed forest tax rebate program. However, as stated in the correspondence I provided, we support for the current tax regime that taxes farmland and managed forests at the appropriate tax level (25% of less of the residential tax rate).

I also discussed with you our desire to see a province-wide exemption from development charges being applied to farm building put in place. Most rural municipalities have a non-statutory exemption for farm buildings stated in their respective development charge bylaws. However, subsequent bylaws may inadvertently omit these exemptions. In those situations, a significant amount of effort is needed to correct the omission.

I was glad to have the opportunity to reiterate why we believe the word "existing" should be removed from the provincial policy statement section on Natural Heritage policy that states "nothing in policy 2.1 is intended to limit the ability of existing agricultural uses to continue." We believe farmers should be afforded the opportunity to use their land for any and all agricultural activities, not just the current existing activity.

Regarding farm property tax assessment issues, I told you that Minister Duncan was receptive to our proposal that he establish a committee which includes farm representatives, municipal representatives, MPAC and government officials to review and provide recommendations on farm assessment issues. I will let you know when details of the committee's establishment are made available.

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Thank you again for meeting with me and for your continued support for Ontario farmers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bette Jean Crews".

Bette Jean Crews  
President

cc: Hon. Carol Mitchell, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
Ontario Federation of Agriculture Board of Directors