



**Ontario Federation of Agriculture**

**Ontario AgriCentre**

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November 27, 2015

Wildlife Section Public Input Coordinator  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry  
300 Water Street  
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M5

To Whom it may concern;

**RE: EBR Registry 012-5485; Amendments to two regulations under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 to extend and expand the Black Bear Pilot Project in parts of northern and central Ontario for an additional five years and to regulate the baiting of black bears.**

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is Canada's largest voluntary general farm organization, representing more than 36,000 family farm businesses across Ontario. These farm businesses form the backbone of our robust food system and rural communities with the potential to drive the Ontario economy forward.

Many Ontario farmers are located in areas where black bears commonly occur. Farmers face losses of both crops and livestock, when local bear populations exceed the capacity of the natural landscape to support them. Farmers also face losses when there is a large scale failure in one or more of the bears' natural food sources. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture welcomes this proposal to extend and expand the Black Bear Pilot Project. We believe that it will enhance black bear management across Ontario, and reduce human-bear conflicts.

**1. Extend the Black Bear Pilot Project for an additional five years; to end June 2020.**

The OFA fully supports the proposed extension of the Black Bear Pilot Project for an additional five years; to end June 2020. The longer period of time, combined with the broader area of application and mandatory reporting of hunter activity and harvest will provide the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry better information on bear population number and distribution. Improved data will lead to improved black bear management across Ontario.

**2. Expand the Black Bear Pilot Project to all Wildlife Management Units that currently have a Fall black bear hunting season.**

The OFA welcomes the expansion of the Black Bear Pilot to include all Wildlife Management Units that currently have a Fall black bear hunting season. In recent years we have seen an increase in nuisance bear incidents, including many instances of bears in urban areas. We believe the expanded area will benefit overall black bear management in Ontario, by better balancing black bear populations, thereby reducing the unfortunate circumstances arising when black bears come into urban areas.

### **3. Add non-resident hunters.**

The OFA supports the inclusion of non-resident hunters in the expanded Black Bear Pilot Project. We recognize that these hunters must employ the services of a guide. The OFA sees this as benefiting hunting guides by providing them with enhanced income opportunities.

### **4. Regulate the baiting of black bears.**

The OFA has no comments on this matter.

The OFA applauds the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry for taking these steps to reduce human-bear conflicts. We also believe these steps will benefit overall black bear management in Ontario.

Yours truly,

Sincerely,



Don McCabe  
President

DC/pj

cc: The Hon. Bill Mauro; Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry  
The Hon. Jeff Leal; Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
OFA Board of Directors