



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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June 17, 2016

Hon. Brad Duguid
Ministry of Economic Development and Growth
8th Floor, Hearst Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 2E1

Dear Minister Duguid,

RE: Integration of the Rural Economic Development (RED) Program with the Jobs and Prosperity Fund (JPF)

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) wishes to submit our views to the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth regarding the integration of the Rural Economic Development (RED) Program into the Jobs and Prosperity Fund (JPF).

The 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.

The 2016 Ontario Budget provided assurance that the province will continue to foster the stability and development of rural communities. Consistent with this intention, the OFA is adamant that rural and agricultural projects that would have qualified under the previous RED Program should continue to qualify under the Business Growth Initiative and the JPF.

The OFA recognizes the importance of the Ontario government's goal of improving coordination. However, the integration of the RED program into the JPF must ensure that funding to support the rural and agricultural community is not reduced, and that the eligibility requirements continue to enable access by the agriculture community.

The OFA appreciates the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth's commitment to working with OMAFRA to "ensure that support programs are delivered in the most efficient manner possible to support the agri-food sector and economic growth in rural communities".

The OFA looks forward to an integrated RED Program that supports the agriculture and rural communities at the same funding levels and with comparable eligibility requirements defined in the RED Program under OMAFRA.

Sincerely,

Don McCabe
President

cc: Hon. Jeff Leal, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs