



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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May 12, 2017

Ms. Monica Russell, Senior Policy Analyst
Ministry of Transportation
Policy and Planning Division
Transportation Planning Branch
Environmental Policy Office
777 Bay Street, Suite 3000
Toronto, ON M7A 2J8

Dear Ms. Russell,

RE: EBR Registry Number 013-0190 Identifying a Province-wide Cycling Network

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

With reference to off road cycling routes, OFA is categorically opposed to any use of Ontario's finite, and shrinking, agricultural land, for any components of a Province-wide Cycling Network. Ontario's agricultural land should solely serve to produce food, fibre and fuel for Ontarians, Canadians and the world.

When it comes to cycling, we note that cyclists and farm equipment share some similarities. Both share roads that are primarily used by vehicles operated by people that are unfamiliar with the rules governing either cyclists or farm equipment. Public education regarding shared roadway safety would also be valuable. In addition, cyclists should be encouraged to wear highly visible clothing, to make themselves as conspicuous as possible.

We also note that there is no specific reference to the Trespass to Property Act provisions pertaining to agricultural lands. The 2010 Ontario Trails Strategy noted that "trespassing, damage to property and interference with agricultural operations" were key among the identified challenges. Furthermore, "educating Ontarians about trails" was a key goal. Regrettably, too many members of the general public, and even some enforcement personnel, seem totally unaware of the Trespass to Property Act's provisions with respect to agricultural lands. Under Section 3, agricultural lands **do not** need to be signed or posted in any way to indicate the owner's intentions that people must stay off. Lands enclosed by a fence, or where a crop is growing, **do not** need to be signed or posted in any way to indicate the owner's intentions that people must stay off. Trail development adjacent to agricultural, either an on road or off road must ensure that cyclists do not stray from a cycling route onto agricultural land. As part of the Province-wide Cycling Network, OFA strongly recommends that the provincial government undertake a broad public campaign to make Ontarians aware of these provisions, that the right to enter privately-owned lands only comes with the owner or occupant's permission.

A concern that has been raised, although not directly connected to the Cycling Network, is the increased popularity in geocaching. One OFA Board member noted he had had to remove geocaching vials three times from on or right beside his property. People looking for them will walk through the fields and climb fence. The Cycling Network could add to this already existing problem.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture appreciates the opportunity to provide its perspective on this posting pertaining to "Identifying a Province-wide Cycling Network". We look forward to seeing our recommendations reflected in the document's final version.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President

KC/pj

cc: Hon. Steven Del Duca; Minister of Transportation
Hon. Jeff Leal; Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
OFA Board of Directors