



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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June 1, 2017

The Honourable Jeff Leal
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
11th Floor, 77 Grenville Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1B3

The Honourable Bill Mauro
Minister of Municipal Affairs
College Park
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

The Honourable Glenn Thibeault
Minister of Energy
Hearst Block
900 Bay Street, 4th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2E1

The Honourable Glen Murray
Minister of Environment & Climate Change
Ferguson Block
77 Wellesley Street West W, 11th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2T5

Bruce Campbell, President and CEO
Independent Electrical Systems Operator
1600-120 Adelaide Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 1T1

Dear Ministers and Mr. Campbell,

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is the largest voluntary, general farm organization in Canada, representing over 36,000 farm families across Ontario. As a dynamic farmer-led organization based in Guelph, Ontario, OFA works to represent and champion the interests of Ontario farmers through government relations, farm policy recommendations, lobby efforts, community representation, media relations and more. OFA is the leading advocate and voice for Ontario farmers.

Earlier this year, farmers and rural representatives from the Municipality of Port Hope raised concerns regarding a Renewable Energy Application (REA) planned solar installation scheduled for construction at 6330 Ganaraska Road. They sent the *Solar By Stealth* report and letters to OMAFRA, MOECC and IESO asking for assistance. As I understand, the Ministry of Energy, along

with MOECC, OMAFRA and IESO were to work closely to balance establishing renewable energy projects with protecting farmland and the environment.

Ministries do not typically get involved with review or approval of specific energy projects; they rely on IESO to have put in place policies to ensure prime agricultural lands are avoided, and processes to adhere to these policies. In this case, procedures were not adhered to with the FIT Contract at 6330 Ganaraska Road. The construction must be revoked unless key shortfalls are addressed.

Because this project is located on lands partially in the Oak Ridge Moraine Conservation Area (ORM), under O. Reg. 359/09: *Renewable Energy Approvals*, proponents are required to consider the full intent of the ORM Plan when determining environmental effects of the energy facility. The proponent failed to consider sensitive aquifers and hydrological features, and natural linkage areas in the ORM. On the contrary, the proponent should have provided expanded Design and Operation Reports.

Somewhere along the line, the Renewable Energy Approvals process has failed. Ministry of Municipal Affairs identified this area as a highly vulnerable aquifer, and the proposed site is at the narrowest width of the ORM threatening to sever the moraine path at the Rice Lake intersect, yet very minimal environmental assessments were submitted for this project.

Relying heavily on 1946 soil maps, the project proponent claimed that the facility would be constructed solely on CLI Class 6 land. Although this highlights the archaic condition of Ontario Soil Inventory data, it also highlights that the proponent failed to provide the necessary expanded reports for facilities on the ORM.

The proponents failed to sufficiently tests soil samples, and especially considering the proximity to the ORM, the farmers and rural representatives in the Port Hope area arranged for two independent pedologists to review the proponent's soils report. The pedologists found that the original tests failed to follow FIT Land Evaluation Study Protocol with at least six deficiencies. The review revealed that at least one soil sample test result was Class 4FM instead of CLI Class 6 land as the proponent claimed. Most concerning is that independent reviewers concluded it would be more aptly classified as Class 3 and protected from renewable energy development.

To be clear, two independent pedologists, with impeccable credentials, came to the same conclusion, highlighting that the proponent's peer review failed to identify missing elements and data open to challenge.

1. The original consultant did not follow the rules. He changed prime agricultural land to non-prime which is completely prohibited. This is beyond dispute. The Government has failed to balance establishing renewable energy projects with protecting farmland and the environment.
2. The consultant did not have enough data to describe the soil correctly. He failed in his responsibility. This project was approved based on inaccurate information which was gathered outside the FIT methodology process.

Although the contract has been in place for three years, the first public notice was provided in February 2017. At the only public meeting for this project, March 30, 2017, the proponent made it very clear that there is no room for negotiation. The community has been kept in the dark, typical for many FIT projects but a critical misstep for projects on such sensitive, prime agricultural land.

The unique location of an energy facility on a highly vulnerable aquifer in the Oak Ridge Moraine at its narrowest corridor, and the incorrect soil classifications and process failures followed by the proponent, require intervention in this application to ensure irreparable damage is avoided. I await your response confirming revocation of the contract or providing a process to correct this flawed application.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President

cc: George McCaw, Director, Environmental Management Branch, OMAFRA
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Northumberland Federation of Agriculture, c/o Lisa Meekes nfa.lisam@gmail.com