



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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November 23, 2017

The Honourable Kevin Flynn
Minister of Labour
400 University Avenue, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1T7

Dear Minister Flynn,

Re: Review of Special Rules and Exemptions under the Employment Standards Act, 2000

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is pleased to comment on the Review of Special Rules and Exemptions under the Employment Standards Act, 2000. The OFA represents over 37,000 farm families across the province. Our members are small businesses and employers with a vested interest in labour rules and exemptions.

The OFA fully supports the position of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) and its comments on these consultations. We agree that the current suite of exemptions and special rules exist because previous governments have acknowledged that certain positions or professions require a flexible approach to scheduling and workload management challenges. These circumstances have not changed and so flexibility must remain.

Furthermore, we agree with the OCC that if changes to the exemptions are considered necessary, government should conduct a thorough economic analysis on the impact of these changes as well as comprehensive, evidence-based research into the actual need to change or remove an exemption.

The current pace of change and uncertainty resulting from Bill 148 has already proven overwhelming to our farm businesses, with many considering reductions in staffing, potential changes to business structure, or expanding their business interests in other jurisdictions. Should changes to an exemption be implemented, it must be carried out in a realistic timeframe that respects the needs of employers and their capacity to make changes while maintaining stability in their businesses. Rapid removal of exemptions or special rules may lead to unintended consequences that serve neither employers or employees.

The OFA appreciates this opportunity to provide input on the exemption review process. We look forward to working with the Ministry of Labour on future reviews of exemptions and special rules to ensure that our farm businesses remain strong and competitive, and able to provide good jobs for Ontarians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Currie', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Keith Currie
President