



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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May 19, 2017

Hon. Kathleen Wynne, Premier
Legislative Building
Room 281
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Wynne:

RE: Final Report of the Changing Workplaces Review

Recent media reports citing senior government officials have indicated that the Ontario government is considering implementing a number of drastic changes to workplace legislation including a more than 30% increase in minimum wage to \$15/hour. This will be particularly devastating to our agriculture sector already reeling from previous legislated increases to the cost of growing food for Ontarians and the world.

OFA has been consistent in stating that we do not believe government can legislate individual wealth or prosperity. The implementation of the policy options being considered would have the perverse effect of discouraging investment and eliminating jobs in rural areas and diminishing economic development opportunities in Ontario. All proposed changes must be de-politicized and must be supported by reliable evidence for there to be any acceptance by the provinces employers.

As we have consistently tried to convey to government, farm workplaces face unique challenges. Farming attempts to control the growth of plants and animals under conditions that are rarely under a farmer's control. To do this successfully requires a very *flexible* approach to managing people, and a *flexible* approach to matching human resources with the demands of food production.

Agricultural production is a highly seasonal activity, and there is a high variability around when crops are planted, and when they are ready for harvest. The challenge of growing food includes the fact that our products are marketed in the domestic or international marketplace where competition is strong, margins are very tight, and a competitive business environment is a prerequisite.

We urge you to consider what effect these reforms will have on an agricultural sector already severely challenged by existing regulatory burden, and what effect these reforms will have on the continued food security and sovereignty of Ontario.

Premier, the OFA strongly supports the recommendation of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and others, that your government subject the proposed reforms in the final report of the Changing Workplaces Review to an economic impact analysis. Any reforms implemented should be those that pass clear thresholds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Currie', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Keith Currie
President

cc: Ontario MPPs
Ontario Commodity Organizations