



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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Public Input Coordinator
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Species Conservation Policy Branch
300 Water Street
Peterborough, ON
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Fax 705-755-2901

To Whom it May Concern;

RE: EBR Registry No. 013-1669 Amendments to Ontario Regulation 242/08 (General Regulation – Endangered Species Act, 2007) relating to forest operations in managed Crown forests, incorporating species recently listed to the “Species at Risk in Ontario” list, and safe harbour

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is Canada’s largest voluntary general farm organization, representing more than 37,000 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.

OFA will only comment on the proposed safe harbour-related amendments due to their ability to negatively impact Ontario’s farm operations.

OFA supports the principle of safe harbour; namely that the recovery of endangered and threatened species can be enhanced through the creation of specialized habitats for specific species, for a pre-determined period of time. The incentive for private landowners undertaking these activities is the assurance that at the end of the pre-determined term of their agreement, that they have the option to remove the created habitat. Our opposition to the Ministry’s current model of safe harbour lies with one safe harbour provision that is missing from Ontario Regulation 242/08; namely the extension of the agreement to abutting properties.

Not including properties abutting the safe harbour places them in an untenable position. They face the possibility that the safe harbour habitat will expand onto their property, but they are denied the option to remove the safe harbour habitat at the end of its pre-determined application. They have no say in the creation of the safe harbour habitat, yet they are denied the option to remove the safe harbour habitat, leaving only them to bear the full burden of sections 9 and 10 of the Endangered Species Act, 2007. Furthermore, safe harbour must not impede the ability of neighbouring farmers to utilize the full suite of beneficial management practices that enhance farm environmental sustainability and farm viability, such as tile drainage.

OFA opposes the extension of safe harbour provisions to species identified as “Special Concern” on the “Species at Risk in Ontario” list. Our principal reason is that without the extension of safe harbour’s opt out provisions to properties abutting the safe harbour site, we cannot endorse this further extension of safe harbour.

Secondarily, we see the further application of safe harbour provisions to “Special Concern” species as potentially harming the recovery of Endangered and Threatened species. Adding “Special Concern” species will diminish the public’s efforts to focus on species of highest need, thereby lessening the effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act’s safe harbour initiative.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
OFA President

KC/pj

cc: Hon. Nathalie DesRosiers; Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Hon. Jeff Leal; Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
OFA Board of Directors