



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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April 13, 2018

Ms. Kristina Rudzki, Supervisor
Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Environmental Assessment and Permissions Division
Environmental Assessment and Permissions Branch
135 St. Clair Avenue West, Floor 1
Toronto, ON M4V 1P5

kristina.rudzki@ontario.ca

Dear Ms. Rudzki,

Re: EBR #013-2099: Updating the Part II Order request process under the Environmental Assessment Act

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.

The OFA has concerns regarding this proposal for Part II Order request under the Environmental Assessment Act. Ultimately, this process must remain easily accessible to all citizens of the Province. It is important to balance the need to have clearly defined and timely process, with the need to ensure that the process is not so technical or rigid that it unintentionally precludes laypeople from having their concerns heard. Failing to understand both the time constraints of citizens and the fact that citizens generally do not hold technical expertise on the matters considered will negatively impact the process.

- **Timelines:** This process must recognize that individuals who may have concerns with a potential Class 2 Environmental Assessment have busy lives and allow adequate time for these people to review, understand and provide comments or concerns on a proposal. For example, any consultations that come out during harvest season will not allow for this farming community to participate. They are working 12-18 hour days and do not have the time to attend meetings, let alone put in the time to learn the process for a part 2 Order Request. The timelines for a Class 2 Environmental Assessment and Order Request must be carefully balanced to ensure appropriate levels of participation are permitted.
- **Citizens are not likely to hold technical expertise.** The "Content of the Part II Order Request" fails to recognize this critical consideration and it is unjust for a Minister (or delegate) to make a decision based on the information being required, as outlined in this posting. For example, a citizen that is concerned that specific unique environmental

considerations are not being taken into account, may not know if this deficiency is best addressed through “an Individual Environmental Assessment under Part II of the Environmental Assessment Act; an order imposing additional conditions; or a referral of the matter to mediation before making a decision.” Similarly, they may not have the technical expertise to clearly define specific conditions.

Public participation is a critical component of environmental decision-making. Failure to allow for meaningful participation can lead to resentment, animosity or ambivalence. The system must allow for meaningful participation to empower all those involved, from the concerned citizen to the corporate proponent to the government (at all jurisdictions) representatives.

I trust our opinions and recommendations will be given due consideration in this consultation. OFA remains available to provide clarification regarding our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Currie', written in a cursive style.

Keith Currie
OFA President