



**Ontario Federation of Agriculture**

**Ontario AgriCentre**

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September 5, 2018

Hon. Jim Wilson  
Minister Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade  
56 Wellesley Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2E7

**VIA email**

Dear Minister Wilson:

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) once again congratulates you on your appointment as Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. We believe that together we can achieve significant accomplishments to make our farming and food sector and our rural communities even stronger.

Rural and regional funding programs are key components of a robust economic development strategy that supports our local communities. Programs such as the Rural Economic Development Program, the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund, the Eastern Ontario Development Fund, and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund programs provide critical funding for priority projects in rural, remote, and agricultural communities. OFA requests that the Ontario government recognizes the unique needs of rural communities when developing and reviewing regional funding programs.

In particular, OFA believes funding programs should:

- Provide long-term, predictable rural funding to support capital priorities of local governments with flexibility for eligibility thresholds;
- Provide flexibility and support for rural municipalities to leverage regional partnerships and achieve economies of scale; and
- Streamline the administrative process to help lower-capacity communities access funds efficiently and fairly.

Combined with significant rural infrastructure investments in affordable energy, high-speed internet and transportation corridors, robust local funding programs will ensure small business innovation and growth will continue to create jobs, enhance competitiveness and fuel Ontario's economy.



We look forward to working with you to ensure small businesses are supported across rural and remote Ontario, including the vital food and farming businesses that drive our economy forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Keith Currie', is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Keith Currie  
President