

September 24, 2020

Erinn Lee
waterpolicy@ontario.ca

Dear Ms. Lee,

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is pleased to have this opportunity to respond to **ERO # 019-2319 and Regulatory Registry Proposal # 20-MECP016 - Proposal to extend the current moratorium on water bottling permits.**

The OFA is the largest general farm organization in Ontario, proudly representing more than 38,000 farm family members across the province. OFA has a strong voice for our members and the agri-food industry on issues, legislation and regulations governed by all levels of government. We are passionate and dedicated to ensuring the agri-food sector and our rural communities are included, consulted and considered in any new and changing legislation that impacts the sustainability and growth of our farm businesses.

Ontario's diverse and innovative agri-food sector is a powerhouse for the province – growing and producing more than 200 farm and food products, fuelling our rural communities and driving the provincial economy by generating more than 860,000 jobs and contributing over \$47 billion to Ontario's annual GDP. We are the leading agricultural advocate for Ontario farmers, their businesses and their communities.

OFA is in favour of extending the existing moratorium on Permits To Take Water (PTTW) for new or increased takings for water bottling purposes while the Ministry looks to “thoroughly review and consider feedback received and further engage on how we can implement our proposed enhancements to Ontario's water taking program.”

OFA recommends that the Ministry continue to work directly with the agricultural community regarding proposed changes to the PTTW program and policies. The agricultural sector holds approximately 64% of all PTTW across the Province. Therefore, it is essential that the agricultural community is included in any discussions regarding potential changes to the PTTW program. The realities of agriculture must be clearly understood to ensure that any proposed changes accommodate the unique nature of agricultural water takings.

The OFA looks forward to working closely with the Province in reviewing the PTTW program.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President

cc: Bill George, Chair, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association
OFA Board of Directors