

MPP Michael Coteau and Candidate Kate Marie Graham
Ontario Liberal Party
Sent via email to:

Dear MPP Coteau, Ms. Graham,

Re: Meeting request to discuss Ontario agriculture and its contribution to our province's recovery from COVID-19.

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) and our rural communities across Ontario, thank you for launching #TakeTheMic – a grassroots-driven policy consultation to guide the Ontario Liberal Party's plan for Ontario.

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 in 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. We are the leading agricultural advocate for Ontario farmers, their businesses and their communities.

I am looking forward to our virtual meeting to discuss how Ontario agriculture can enhance its contribution to Ontario's economic recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. OFA has identified many investments and policy changes needed to achieve this goal, and as the Ontario Liberal Party rebuilds, we believe that our province's agri-food and rural communities can bring a unique perspective to the table.

Ontario is at a critical point. This year, the priority will shift towards rebuilding an economy that has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic by creating an environment that will allow Ontario businesses to emerge stronger and better from one of the most challenging times in the history of the province.

With the right investments in the right places, agriculture will be a significant player in bringing Ontario's economy back to its pre-COVID might. Agriculture is already a powerhouse in the province. Ontario's diverse and innovative agri-food sector is 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.

Sound investments in rural Ontario will jumpstart farming, agri-business, and rural Ontario growth — and in turn stimulate the entire provincial economy.

OFA recommends four key areas in rural Ontario where the province can stimulate the economy:

- 1. Invest in rural infrastructure (roads, bridges, drainage, broadband Internet, energy).**
- 2. Restore Ontario's capacity for food sovereignty and food safety.**
- 3. Preserve rural schools and health care.**
- 4. Respect the unique needs of rural Ontario communities.**

We look forward to working with you and the Ontario Liberal Party as the Party develops its policy positions. I am hoping to meet with you soon to discuss these items and other issues.

Sincerely,



Peggy Brekveld
President

cc: OFA Board of Directors