

Ontario Federation of Agriculture Submission to Standing Committee on Justice Policy

Regarding Consideration of Bill 91, *Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act, 2023*

April 26, 2023

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Standing Committee Chair Goldie Ghamari, MPP
Standing Committee on Justice Policy
Whitney Block, Room 1405,
99 Wellesley Street W
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A2

Submitted online and via scjp@ola.org

Dear Standing Committee Chair and Members:

Re: Bill 91, Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act, 2023 (Schedule 30)

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

Ontario's agri-food sector is an economic powerhouse – producing more than 200 farm and food products, fuelling rural communities, generating nearly 750,000 jobs, and contributing over \$47 billion to Ontario's annual GDP. The province's agri-food strategy, Grow Ontario, aims to strengthen the agri-food sector, support economic growth, and ensure an efficient, reliable and responsible food supply. By removing barriers, unnecessary costs and red tape, Ontario farmers will be positioned to seize opportunities and rise to the challenge of an ambitious growth strategy, allowing the agri-food sector to drive the economy forward.

OFA supports the Ontario government's efforts to increase competitiveness and build a stronger agri-food supply chain by removing unnecessary and burdensome red tape and ensuring farmers are paid for the agricultural commodities they produce and sell. OFA wholeheartedly supports the proposed Protecting Farmers From Non-Payment Act as specified in schedule 30 of Bill 91. Creating this new Act will not only enable the merging of protections currently provided under the *Farm Products Payments Act*, *Grains Act* and *Livestock and Livestock Products Act*, but it will make it easier to expand programming to cover payments for agricultural products that currently do not have such protections.

OFA was pleased to participate in OMAFRA's consultation process with the agricultural sector that began in 2019. OFA supports efforts to make it easier to expand programming to cover agricultural products beyond the existing commodities. OFA has recommended that OMAFRA engage and assist other commodity groups, expressing interest in developing a financial protection program to protect their producers, with drafting the needed business plan. OFA supports streamlining the legislative and regulatory framework. Consolidating all legislation governing farm financial protection programming into a single Act would result in a clear understanding of authorities, responsibilities, and obligations.

OFA is also supportive of the updates that clarify licencing requirements, expanding the available compliance tools and allowing for greater flexibility in program delivery. Finally, OFA appreciates the consultation with the sector that took place during the development of these proposed changes.

Sincerely,



Peggy Brekveld
President

cc: The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
The Honourable Parm Gill, Minister of Red Tape Reduction
Tamara Fernandes, Director (Acting), Farm Finance Branch, OMAFRA
OFA Board of Directors