

**Ministry of Natural
Resources and Forestry**

Office of the Minister

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**Ministère des Richesses
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354-2023-1334

December 7, 2023

Peggy Brekveld
President
Ontario Federation of Agriculture
peggy.brekveld@ofa.on.ca

Dear Peggy Brekveld:

Thank you for writing on behalf of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture regarding the authorization of deer harassment by farmers and adjusting tag numbers and seasons in areas of crop loss due to deer. I appreciate your concerns and your acknowledgment of the importance of white-tailed deer in Ontario. As you may know, white-tailed deer are the most sought-after big game species for harvest by licensed hunters.

It is important to recognize that human-deer conflicts can occur not only when deer are abundant across the landscape, but also when small concentrations of deer exist on a single property. Also, the different perspectives and values that people place on deer will influence whether those individuals perceive an interaction with deer as being a conflict.

The authorization to harass deer helps ensure harassment is done in a safe, responsible and humane manner. For example, authorizations are generally not issued between May 15 to August 15 to prevent orphaning dependent fawns. Additionally, authorizations help ministry staff understand why gunshots or explosions may be occurring outside of open hunting seasons.

Managing white-tailed deer, including determining harvest quotas, involves the consideration of several factors such as human-deer conflict levels, information obtained from mandatory deer hunter reports and winter severity. These factors informed the decisions to increase the provincial tag quota in 2022 and again in 2023.

Any proposals to change policy or regulations related to white-tailed deer management, including the deer harassment authorization for farmers, would require public consultation through the Environmental Registry of Ontario and conversations with stakeholders like the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

To learn more about deer management in Ontario, please visit: [White-tailed deer in Ontario | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/white-tailed-deer).

Thank you again for writing and sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Graydon Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

The Honourable Graydon Smith
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

c: The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Wendy Beaton, Corporate Secretary, Ontario Federation of Agriculture