



December 12, 2025

The Honourable Gregor Robertson
Minister of Housing and Infrastructure
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6

The Honourable David J. McGuinty
Minister of National Defence
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Heath MacDonald
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
Ottawa, Ontario,
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RE: Renewed Call to Protect Canadian Farmland and Introduce a Mandatory Agricultural Impact Assessment for Federal Infrastructure Projects

Dear Ministers,

On behalf of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the BC Agriculture Council, we are writing to express our deep concern regarding the loss of prime agricultural land in Canada and the implications this holds for our national food security. Canada's agricultural land is a finite and increasingly threatened resource. According to the 2021 Census of Agriculture, the total farm area in Canada declined by 3.2% from the previous census period, amounting to a loss of over 5 million hectares since 2001. This trend is exacerbated by urban expansion, infrastructure development, and land consolidation.

Canadian agriculture and agri-food are vital contributors to our nation's economy and society, generating over \$150 billion in gross domestic product and representing approximately 7% of Canada's total GDP. This sector supports the health and prosperity of both rural and urban communities across the country and employs upwards of 2.3 million people.

In 2022, we raised alarm over the potential industrial development of federally owned farmland in Surrey, BC—land that has been farmed by Heppell’s Potatoes for over three generations and is critical to Western Canada’s fresh vegetable supply. This land, which produces 30–50 million servings of fresh vegetables annually, is not protected by the BC Agricultural Land Reserve and remains vulnerable to development under the Campbell Heights Industry Plan.

Further, the recent proposal by the Department of National Defence (DND) to expropriate over 4,000 acres of prime farmland in Simcoe County, Ontario for an Over the Horizon Radar project further underscores the urgency of this issue. This land, adjacent to the ecologically sensitive Minesing Wetlands, supports grain and livestock production and is vital to local and national food systems. The proposed development threatens not only agricultural productivity but also the integrity of a key watershed and the livelihoods of farming families in the region.

These cases—Surrey and Simcoe County—are emblematic of a broader national trend: the steady erosion of Canada’s prime agricultural land base. Once lost to development, farmland cannot be reclaimed. The consequences for food sovereignty, climate adaptation, and rural sustainability are profound.

Today, we reiterate our call to protect this land and urge the Government of Canada to take decisive action to safeguard Canada’s agricultural future. Specifically, we call on your offices to champion the introduction of a mandatory Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) for all major federal infrastructure projects. Such an assessment would ensure that decisions affecting farmland are made with full consideration of their long-term impact on food security, climate resilience, and rural economies.

We therefore urge you and your Ministerial colleagues to:

- Immediately halt development plans for the federally owned farmland in Surrey, BC, and Simcoe County recognizing its irreplaceable role in regional food production and climate resilience.
- Support the implementation of a mandatory Agricultural Impact Assessment for all major federal infrastructure and development projects, ensuring that agricultural land is evaluated and protected as a critical national resource.
- Demonstrate federal leadership by prioritizing food production and security in infrastructure planning, and by working with provinces and municipalities to align land use decisions with national food security goals.
- Ensure any decision to remove agricultural land from production is coupled with multi-year transition periods to allow affected farmers to undertake financially-sound business plans that support their continued viability as agricultural producers.

Protecting farmland is not a barrier to progress—it is a prerequisite for sustainable growth. We believe that safeguarding Canada’s agricultural assets is essential to ensuring a resilient food supply for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further and collaborate on solutions that balance infrastructure needs with the imperative to protect Canada’s farmland.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President
Canadian Federation of Agriculture



Drew Spoelstra
President
Ontario Federation of Agriculture



Jennifer Woike
President
BC Agriculture Council

Cc: Paul Halucha, Deputy Minister, Housing and Infrastructure
Stefanie Beck, Deputy Minister, National Defence
Lawrence Hanson, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada