

June 10, 2026

Transport Canada  
330 Sparks St  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N5

Submitted via email to [TC.engagement.TC@tc.gc.ca](mailto:TC.engagement.TC@tc.gc.ca)

To whom it may concern,

**Re: Industry Engagement on Strengthening One Canadian Economy through trade and transportation**

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

OFA appreciates the opportunity to provide input on strengthening Canadian trade and transportation. Our topline feedback is summarized below:

- Support practical federal investment in rail, highway, and marine trade corridors to improve capacity, reliability, safety, and competitiveness.
- Prioritize rural and agricultural impacts in project planning, including farmland severance, local access, drainage, private crossings, fencing, and community disruption.
- Ensure major transportation decisions, including the proposed Alto high-speed rail project, are guided by clear productivity gains, fair landowner treatment, and minimal impacts on farmland and rural communities.
- Treat four-laning and improving key east-west highway corridors, including Highways 11 and 17, as a nation-building economic priority.
- Accelerate timely approvals and infrastructure investments that strengthen Canadian port and marine trade capacity.

Agriculture and agri-food depend on efficient access to both domestic and international markets. In 2024, Canada's agriculture and agri-food system generated \$150 billion in GDP, accounted for roughly 7% of national GDP, and supported approximately 2.3 million jobs.

Many commodities, including red meat, cereal grains, and pulse crops, are highly trade dependent. Roughly half of Canadian agricultural production is exported directly or processed for export. Reliable transportation infrastructure is a core competitiveness issue for the sector.

Improving trade corridors is essential. Ports, railways, and trucking networks must function as an integrated system that can move inputs and products efficiently, reliably, and at competitive cost.

Rail freight service is vital to national and provincial supply chains. In Northern Ontario, it is particularly important to agriculture and natural resource industries that depend on moving large-volume, heavy shipments over long distances. Rail links these industries to suppliers, processors, and customers across the continental network.

Northern Ontario needs an efficient, reliable, and financially sustainable rail freight network. Federal policy should prioritize investment in critical pinch points and corridor upgrades that improve capacity, resilience, and service reliability across the national system.

Government must also ensure that land access negotiations are fair and that rail operators remain responsible for drainage, private rail crossings, and fencing. These obligations should not be transferred to landowners. Existing issues should be resolved before new freight or passenger rail projects proceed so proponents can demonstrate a credible commitment to fair landowner treatment.

OFA recommends that Transport Canada carefully assess the costs, benefits, and rural impacts of the proposed Alto high-speed rail project, that would shift passenger service away from the existing passenger and freight corridor and into rural central Ontario. Federal decisions on major transportation investments should be guided by clear national productivity gains, fair treatment of affected landowners, and minimal disruption to farmland, local roads, and rural communities.

The highway corridors linking Quebec City to Kenora and Quebec City to Windsor are among Canada's most important trade routes. In Ontario, Highways 11 and 17 are critical east-west trucking corridors, yet long sections remain only two lanes. Combined with severe weather, limited passing opportunities, and heavy freight volumes, these conditions create unacceptable safety and reliability risks. Until these routes are expanded and maintained to a higher standard, Canadian carriers will continue to rely on U.S. corridors to move goods across Canada. A safe, reliable, and well-serviced four-lane corridor across the country should be treated as a nation-building economic priority.

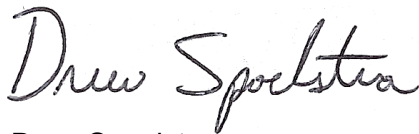
As trucking corridors are improved, project design must reduce impacts on agricultural and rural communities. That includes minimizing farmland severance, preserving local cross-corridor access, and accounting for the effect of increased traffic on nearby communities and farm operations.

Marine transport is equally important. When Canadian port infrastructure lacks capacity, competitiveness, or timely approvals, exporters look elsewhere, including to U.S. facilities<sup>1</sup>. As the headwaters of the Great Lakes shipping network, Ontario plays a strategic role in moving western and northern goods to domestic processors and export markets. Federal policy should accelerate approvals and infrastructure investments that strengthen Canada's port and marine trade capacity.

OFA appreciates the opportunity to provide our perspectives. Strengthening Canada's trade infrastructure must include practical investments in rail, highway, and marine corridors, alongside fair treatment for rural landowners and communities affected by major projects.

We look forward to continued engagement with the federal government on policy solutions that support a competitive, resilient agri-food sector.

Sincerely,



Drew Spoelstra  
President

cc: OFA Board of Directors

*This submission has been approved by OFA Board of Directors and will be posted to OFA's website: <https://ofa.on.ca/resources>.*

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<sup>1</sup> CBC News Nov. 2, 2025. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/nutrien-selects-u-s-port-to-build-new-potash--9.6992424> Nutrien selects U.S. port to build new potash export terminal.