

Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs

Ministère de l'Agriculture, de
l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Office of the Minister

Bureau du ministre

77 Grenville Street, 11th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1B3
Tel: 416-326-3074
www.ontario.ca/OMAFRA

77, rue Grenville, 11^e étage
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1B3
Tél. : 416 326-3074
www.ontario.ca/MAAARO



October 6, 2023

Amy Martin
Mayor
County of Norfolk
mayor@norfolkcounty.ca

Al Meneses
CAO
County of Norfolk
al.meneses@norfolkcounty.ca

Dear Mayor Martin and Mr. Menses:

Thank you and your delegation for meeting with me during the 2023 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference. I appreciated the discussion and look forward to working together to address the concerns that were raised by your municipalities.

Ontario's farmland is critical to the success of our agri-food sector, which is a key driver of the economy and supports hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Through the Grow Ontario Strategy, our government will strengthen the agri-food sector, ensure an efficient, reliable, and responsive food supply and address ongoing vulnerabilities through new innovations. The strategy sets goals of increasing the production of food grown and prepared in Ontario by 30 per cent by 2032. The strategy also includes a goal to make our province the destination of choice for international agri-food workers.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's draft Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) supports the creation of housing opportunities in rural areas, while balancing the need for our agriculture and food industries to grow and remain strong. We have clearly heard the concerns about the proposed lot severances. We appreciate the feedback we have received from the public and stakeholders and will not be moving forward with severances on farmland.

My ministry and I will continue to work closely with our colleagues at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to look at ways to benefit farm families.

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I recognize the workforce challenges many rural communities are facing. Access to labour is a challenge for many, and our government is committed to addressing this issue.

We continue to work with our colleagues across different ministries to support workforce solutions to address the tight labour market and to promote development of in-demand skills needed for the agri-food sector and rural communities.

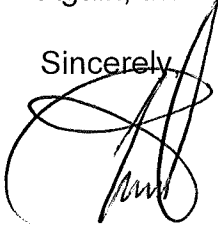
Staff from my ministry closely monitor federal labour policy and we work collaboratively with other levels of government to address key issues in the agri-food and rural sectors.

OMAFRA's Labour Trade and Economic Development Branch has Economic and Business Advisors located throughout the province. The Ministry's Economic and Business Advisor covering Norfolk County is Nick Kinkel. He can be reached at nick.kinkel@ontario.ca or 519-420-7686.

Regarding your concerns about drainage in the county, my ministry knows drainage is critical to supporting agriculture and food production, the environment and economic sustainability in rural Ontario. I encourage you to discuss your issues further with Timothy Brook, OMAFRA's Drainage Program Coordinator.

Again, thank you for meeting with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Jones', with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

Trevor Jones
Parliamentary Assistant to the
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Did you know about the Farmers' Wellness Initiative?

- Your mental health is important! If you're a farmer or a member of a farm family and in need of mental health support, please call 1-866-267-6255 and arrange to speak with a professional today.
- For additional resources visit: <https://farmerwellnessinitiative.ca/>.