



Friday, June 16, 2023

The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Delivered via email: minister.mah@ontario.ca

Proposed Provincial Planning Statement

Dear Minister Clark,

I would like to begin by thanking your Caucus colleagues, Minister Thompson, Speaker Arnott, and Parliamentary Assistant Rae, for speaking with the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) on May 25 to discuss the proposed Provincial Planning Statement and the impacts on rural communities and agricultural land in Western Ontario.

The WOWC has concerns with respect to the changes that would increase the Province's capacity to intervene in development (i.e. through the use of MZOs), as well as a number of the proposed changes to the Provincial land use planning direction contained in draft of the new Provincial Planning Statement (PPS). The proposed PPS policy areas that are currently of greatest concern to the WOWC are residential lot creation in agricultural areas and the settlement expansion process and related requirements.

We were pleased to learn that the Province has committed to the preservation of agricultural land and clarified that the intention has always been to support farmers, their families and agricultural workers by providing housing options that would let children taking over the farm or retiring parents live close by to assist with succession planning.

Further, we are encouraged that any ambiguity regarding this stated intention will be clarified, eliminated, and resolved, through the elimination of the proposed rural residential lot creation policies and continuing to work with municipalities and the agricultural sector to identify alternatives to assist farm families in succession planning, but that do not involve additional severances.

With the Province's stated commitment to addressing the above noted agricultural policy concerns, it is hoped that Province can now focus its attention on addressing the other key area of concern to the WOWC, which is the proposed changes to the settlement expansion process and related requirements.

Expansion of settlement boundaries without appropriate limitations and justification requirements (i.e., a maximum planning horizon, minimum densities and unit mix, justification of need, etc.), is the next greatest threat to agricultural land and operations in Ontario and will negatively impact the ability of the Province and municipalities to achieve other important planning objectives (e.g. building complete communities, ensuring efficient use of infrastructure and public services, etc.). As such, it will be critical that this proposed policy change also be further reviewed and revised to address these concerns.

To ensure the various concerns identified in this letter are appropriately considered and addressed, the WOWC is hereby offering to work/consult further with the Province to identify potential policy solutions and requesting that the Province release a revised draft of the PPS document that incorporates the feedback received from municipalities through this first round of consultation, for further municipal review and comment, prior to finalizing.

Given the importance of the PPS to planning for complete and sustainable communities, protecting our natural resources, and the future of the Province as a whole, this is both a reasonable request and prudent consultation step.

Please find enclosed our complete submission to the Environmental Registry of Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glen McNeil". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Warden Glen McNeil
Chair, Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus

cc.

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
The Honourable Ted Arnott, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
MPP Matthew Rae, Parliamentary Assistant, Municipal Affairs and Housing
MPPs of Western Ontario
Members of the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus

Attachment: WOWC Submission to Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) Posting 019-6813