

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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Vice President
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Dear Peggy Brekveld and Drew Spoelstra:

I want to begin by thanking you for the constructive dialogue over the last several weeks regarding our government's proposed Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), which would integrate and replace the current Provincial Policy Statement and A Place to Grow: The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Premier Ford, myself and my colleagues across government hold a deep appreciation for the hard work being done by Ontario farmers every day, and we welcome your advice and partnership as we move forward.

The proposed Provincial Planning Statement is part of our government's efforts to tackle Ontario's housing supply crisis by supporting the construction of 1.5 million homes by 2031. It is important to note that while the policies proposed for inclusion within the PPS were introduced at the same time as Bill 97 (the *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act*), these proposals, which include the consultation on rural lot severances, are not legislative changes and therefore are not a part of Bill 97. In other words, should the legislature choose to pass Bill 97 into law, the proposed PPS would not be affected or go into force as a result. The proposals remain open for comment on the Environmental Registry of Ontario.

I also want to clarify the government's intentions regarding consultation on rural lot severances. Our goal 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. We understand that farming is often a multi-generational family enterprise, and our government has been asked by many farmers to offer practical support to them and their families by making it easier for the next generation to live and work in the same place where they grew up.

At the same time, we have clearly heard the concerns that have been raised about the need to preserve Ontario's farmland – and we share that goal. To be clear: It has never been our intention for severed lots to be transferred or sold to non-family/farm owners, nor for these lots to have anything more than single-family homes (i.e. no multi-residential structures). Any ambiguity regarding our intentions will be clarified, eliminated and resolved.

We want to continue working with the agricultural sector to look at alternatives that would assist farm families in succession planning, but do not involve additional severances. At the same time, we want to make sure we are protecting farming operations from residential uses, while ensuring health and safety requirements are met. It is of the utmost importance for Premier Ford and our government that we support Ontario farmers and their families being able to continue growing their operations unencumbered.

To facilitate these objectives, the government is extending the commenting deadline on the Environmental Registry of Ontario by an additional 60 days, for a revised closing date of August 4, 2023. This will give the public an enhanced opportunity to comment on the proposals and will give our government more time to consider alternative solutions to support multi-generational farm families without adding additional severances. We appreciate the commitment of agricultural groups on working with us to develop solutions that do not negatively impact the ability to farm.

Once again, I would like to thank you for bringing your concerns to our government's attention and assure you of the continued importance our government places on a collaborative partnership with Ontario farmers. I trust this extended commentary period will give us the chance to work together to find a solution that continues to protect Ontario's farmland while ensuring all Ontarians – including farmers – can find a home that meets their needs and budget.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark
Minister

- c. The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs