



WELLINGTON FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

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Sent via email to:

Kerri O'Kane, Clerk, Township of Centre Wellington

Dina Lundy, Clerk, Town of Erin

Amanda Knight, Clerk, Township of Guelph/Eramosa

Larry Wheeler, Clerk, Township of Mapleton

Annilene McRobb, Clerk, Town of Minto

Courtenay Hoytfox, Clerk, Township of Puslinch

Karren Wallace, Clerk, Township of Wellington North

Re: The importance of Minimum Distance Separation requirements

All municipal councils and clerks in Wellington County,

The Wellington Federation of Agriculture (WFA) is the largest farm organization in the County of Wellington with over 1500 members. Wellington County is a hub of agricultural innovation, research, and leadership in the province. The primary agriculture sector in Wellington County plays a crucial role in the economy by contributing \$841 million to Ontario's GDP and employing over 12,260 people. Wellington County accounts for a notable portion of the provincial agricultural supply chain, too, producing 5.8% of 2021 provincial farm cash receipts. Protecting and preserving the highly productive agricultural land for the purpose of growing, harvesting, and producing food is the Wellington Federation of Agriculture's (WFA) priority.

WFA's recent Agri-Food Systems Study found that Wellington County businesses in agriculture and food contribute \$2.8 billion to Canada's Gross Domestic Product with only 0.2% of Ontario's land base. That land base has 3% of the total prime agricultural land in the province. Along with its geographical position and climate, Wellington County is one of the best places in Canada to produce food. If its location to trade markets and growing populations requiring food are included, the future for commerce fed by agriculture in Wellington County is enormous.

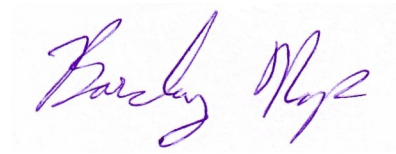
With the population in Wellington County expected to grow substantially to meet the needs of new residents by 2051, this has placed pressure on the lands in rural areas to become home for more new homes. Without studious planning, the future of the farms and farm practices in Wellington County can be negatively affected.

The Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) requirements dictated by Ontario's Provincial Policy Statement, are an important planning tool to help prevent conflict between livestock farms and/or agricultural practices and nearby residences. The reduction of MDS can hurt this attempt to reduce/prevent conflict. Not only is the smell of manure and the flow of its nutrients in the soil important, but the future needs of the farm business as well should be kept in mind. A farm business may need to invest in new facilities for livestock health, or the Ministry of Agriculture may require new manure management and storage due to new science. An already reduced MDS would impede a farm business from being able to improve itself. Because of this, WFA does not see MDS reduction requests as minor.

Before the Provincial government's Bill 23, a municipality's decisions on minor variances that resulted in a negative conclusion to a farm business could be appealed. Unfortunately, Bill 23 has removed that right to appeal. This makes the composing of a decision to allow for a minor variance, such as the reduction of a MDS setback, that much more critical.

The WFA appreciates the opportunities to comment on proposed applications that come to our Board of Directors. Unfortunately, as a volunteer body, there are only so many hours in a month that we can submit ourselves to providing an agricultural view to each of the municipalities in Wellington County. We believe by working with councils and their staff to educate on agriculture, that our perspective can be further understood. If there are questions or topics that your council or staff may have on agriculture or an aspect of it, we would be welcome to find an answer for you. Please do not hesitate to use us as a resource.

Sincerely,



Barclay Nap
President, Wellington Federation of Agriculture

Cc via email:

Sarah Wilhelm, County of Wellington Planning Department
Matthew Rae, MPP Perth-Wellington
Ted Arnott, MPP Wellington-Halton Hills
WFA Board of Directors