

Office of the Minister

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Mr. Geri Kamenz, Chair
Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission
5th Floor
1 Stone Road West
Guelph, Ontario
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Dear Mr. Kamenz:

This letter is in response to the amendments proposed by the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission ("the Commission") to the current regulation applicable to the marketing of vegetables for processing.

In particular, I understand that the Commission is proposing to amend Regulation 440 to remove the provisions establishing negotiating agencies and to add provisions establishing an industry advisory committee.

I also understand that the Commission's proposal is motivated by the Premier's Challenge to grow the Agri-Food sector, and I thank you for that. Ontario's regulated marketing sector accounts for approximately 70% of Ontario farm cash receipts and will be an important contributor to the growth goals for jobs, investment, and contribution to the provincial economy. However, I take seriously the fact that concerns have been raised about an apparent lack of both adequate and sufficient information and consultation with interested parties regarding the Commission's proposed action. Without a more open and transparent dialogue on this proposal, it is not clear to me how it may serve the broad policy objectives of the Government of Ontario.

Accordingly, under section 13 of the *Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act*, I direct the Commission to:

Develop a plan for engagement and consultation with interested parties and stakeholders concerning any proposed amendments to the regulatory framework for the vegetables for processing industry. To be clear, it is the expectation of the Government of Ontario that such amendments, if any, will be consistent with the needs of both producers and processors and will contribute to the government of Ontario's broad policy objectives of supporting regulated marketing and increasing the number of agriculture related jobs in Ontario. At a minimum, the plan shall include:

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- (a) A detailed economic analysis of industry competitiveness and opportunities for growth considered by the Commission in support of any proposed amendments;
- (b) Opportunities that will facilitate more informed participation of interested parties and stakeholders in the decision making process; and
- (c) A requirement for posting information concerning any specific amendments on the Provincial Regulatory Registry for a period of not less than sixty (60) days ensuring that the posting is sufficiently detailed so that any policy and economic objectives of the regulatory proposal are clearly articulated.

I also direct that the Commission shall not implement any amendments to the existing regulatory framework applicable to the vegetables for processing industry until such time as the above-noted plan for engagement and consultation with stakeholders has been successfully carried out and the Commission has reported back to me on the results of the implementation of that plan.

Ontario's Open Government initiative is intended to create a more open and transparent government for the people of Ontario. In that context, I would request that the expectations noted above should apply to public engagement on any and all reforms contemplated by the Commission on a go forward basis.

I look forward to receiving confirmation from the Commission that this direction has been successfully carried out.

In closing, I want to offer my sincere thanks to the Commission for its ongoing commitment and hard work on behalf of the industry and all Ontarians. This is difficult and complex work, but it is of vital importance to the future of our industry and Ontario's economy. I look forward to continuing to work with the Commission and the industry in a collaborative way to put forward solutions that work for farmers, processors, and the people of Ontario.

Sincerely,



Jeff Leal
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs



Good Things Grow in Ontario
À bonne terre, bons produits