

January 14, 2020

Mayor George Pirie
City of Timmins
220 Algonquin Boulevard East
Timmins, ON
P4N 1B3
george.pirie@timmins.ca

Mayor Johanne Baril
Town of Val Rita – Harty
2 de l'Église Avenue
Box 100
Val Rita, Ontario
P0L 2G0
cjbaril@hotmail.com

Mr. Gilles Matko, Chair
Northeast Community Network (NeCN)
c/o Nord-Aski Regional Economic Development Corporation
1500 Front Street, PO Bag 6000
Hearst, ON
P0L 1N0
gilles.matko@nordaski.com

Via email

Dear Mayor Pirie, Mayor Baril and Mr. Matko:

RE: OFA support for the Ontario Claybelt Development Project proposal

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is Canada's largest voluntary general farm organization, representing more than 38,000 farm family businesses across Ontario. These farm businesses form the backbone of a robust food system and rural communities with the potential to drive the Ontario and national economies forward.

Ontario's Great Clay Belt in north-eastern Ontario represents a significant opportunity to expand the agricultural capacity of our province, economic development for the region, increased private sector investment, and job creation. While Quebec has dramatically expanded agricultural production in its Claybelt region, currently only 1.4% of Ontario's Claybelt area is used for agriculture.

We understand that the project led by your Committee will be focused on developing a comprehensive business plan, analysis and detailed recommendations that will advance large-

scale agricultural development, expansion and investment in the region. We also understand that the Committee is seeking funding support from the provincial and federal government that will help fund this important work.

OFA's Producing Prosperity campaign calls for greater investment in Ontario's agri-food sector and rural communities as an effective strategy to deliver economic growth, enhance competitiveness and produce prosperity for all Ontarians. The project led by your Committee is an exciting initiative, and an opportunity for Ontario – and for Canada – to increase agricultural production for domestic and export markets, increase investment, and diversify the regional economy in north-eastern Ontario.

OFA wholly supports the need for the comprehensive business plan as identified in your proposal. We hope you are successful in receiving government funding for the business plan, modelling and related studies that are required for this initiative.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President

cc: Christopher Holz, Campbell Strategies: chrish@campbellstrategies.com