



Holland Marsh Growers' Association

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October 11, 2024

RE: Sarjeants Co. LTD MZO in Bradford Ontario

Dear Minister Calandra,

We represent the 125 farms that cover 7,000 acres of highly productive farmland in the Holland Marsh. These lands include a Provincially Significant Specialty Crop Area and Prime Agricultural Area. These lands are supposed to be protected through provincial guidelines and plans.

Recently we became aware of a proposed Minister Zoning Order (MZO) to allow the relocation of Sarjeant Company Ltd.'s Ready to Mix Concrete Batching Plant from 311 Sideroad 10 in Bradford to 1934 Sideroad 5 in Bradford. It is understood that the Town of Bradford's council has supported the MZO proposal. While the Bradford town council has been extremely supportive of local agriculture and the Holland Marsh Growers' Association we disagree with their decision to support this MZO.

We object to the relocation of this industrial plant using this MZO approach for a number of reasons.

- ☐ **Crop food safety and contamination of both irrigation and drinking water are the top reasons.**
- ☐ The proposed site on Sideroad 5 is located on 48 acres of *prime agricultural land*. This farmland, which is part of the county's *agricultural system*, would be lost under the proposed action.
- ☐ The proposed site is in the middle of a number of existing farms that would suffer from increased traffic, noise, pollution and road damage from the associated increased industrial usage required for this type of plant. The proposed site has been a productive part of the farming landscape adjacent to Holland Marsh for decades.
- ☐ The use of the MZO instrument for this relocation would eliminate the opportunity for concerned local residents, including those from outside the farming community, from having input into the zoning in an area that is important to the local farming community.
- ☐ The use of the MZO also eliminates the opportunity to properly analyze and assess the potential impacts to agriculture in the area. This may impact the food safety and the security of the water supply.
- ☐ An important local water course, the north branch of the Schomberg River, that feeds directly into the Holland Marsh, transects the property leading to additional run-off and possible contamination. We also understand the property includes a Provincially Significant Wetland. Part

of the property is zoned EPA and is regulated lands according to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

- While we understand and appreciate Sarjeant's offer to be subject to a development agreement subject to pre-consultation, plans assessment, studies and reports, we believe that it is critically important that the consideration of other locations HAS to be part of the impact evaluation process.
- In its application Sarjeant's has also requested permissions to establish a fuel storage facility, a truck fuel dispensing facility and an electric vehicle charging station facility. It is unclear what impact these types of uses will have on the surround landscape, particularly considering the location is associated with an important local watercourse.
- We also note that the Town's Planning staff did not provide an opinion on whether this was an appropriate development for this area.

While we understand the importance of Sarjeant's to the local economy, we feel there are better locations, outside agricultural lands that would be less impactful to our community and the land we farm.

We understand and support the need for this type of operation to help our town grow and to assist in the development of the Bradford Bypass, Highway 400 and other parts of the transportation network that we all depend on. It's just the wrong spot.

I will remind you that Ontario relies on this area to provide over 60 percent of the carrots and onions for the province. In total, 66 varieties of vegetables are grown in the Marsh. The area is known internationally as the Soup and Salad bowl of Ontario and Canada.

Preserving agricultural land should be a priority and these types of developments should be placed in the Employment lands or Industrial zonings. The Town has other concrete batch plants currently in operation and these plants are in much more suitable locations. There are hundreds and hundreds of acres in the Employment lands that could support a more appropriate site that has the proper zoning, has the proper site plan controls and has the proper road networks to support this type of development.

It simply does not belong in the agricultural area. Food safety issues and environmental issues that will put the farms and their drinking and irrigation water at risk.

Would you have concerns if water containing contaminants from a Concrete Batching Plant or fueling station was perhaps sprayed on the vegetables you eat?

We look forward to working together to find a solution.

Thanks for your consideration.

Jody Mott
Executive Director
Holland Marsh Growers' Association

CC: Minister Khanjin
Minister Flack
Minister Mulroney

