

January 22, 2025

Emergency Management Policy and Governance Branch
Emergency Management Strategy, Monitoring and Intelligence Division
315 Front St. W
Toronto, ON
M7A 0B8

Submitted via email to: EMOPolicy@Ontario.ca

Dear Emergency Management Policy and Governance Branch,

Re: ERO 019-9467: Bill 238, Emergency Management Modernization Act, 2024: Proposed amendments to the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is the largest general farm organization in Ontario, proudly representing more than 38,000 farm family members. OFA has a strong voice for our members and the agri-food industry on issues, legislation and regulations administered by all levels of government. We are dedicated to ensuring that the agri-food sector and rural communities are considered and consulted with for any new or changing legislation that would impact the sustainability and growth of our farm businesses.

OFA appreciates this opportunity to provide input on the consultation on ERO 019-9467: Bill 238, Emergency Management Modernization Act, 2024: Proposed amendments to the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. The integrity and stability of the food supply chain can be jeopardized when widespread emergencies affect Ontario's farmers. OFA firmly believes that agricultural emergencies and food security must be recognized as top priorities within the province's emergency management framework.

To enhance Ontario's management framework, OFA would like to re-iterate some of our key messaging expressed in our submission on [ERO 019-8860: Engagement on Proposed Modernization of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act](#):

Ensuring Effective Municipal Programs for Agricultural Emergencies

The proposed modernization should explicitly address how municipalities with a significant number of agricultural properties can customize their emergency management programs, specific to their farm operations. These municipalities often face farm-specific emergencies, such as disease outbreaks and extreme weather events, that require tailored approaches. The OFA requests the inclusion of clear guidance for municipalities to develop agricultural-specific emergency protocols. Such measures would help safeguard food production, public health, and local economies.

Support for Rural Municipalities

Rural municipalities often lack the capacity and resources of larger urban centers. To ensure equitable emergency response capabilities, OFA recommends that additional funding or resources be allocated specifically to rural municipalities. This support would empower them to manage agricultural emergencies more effectively, from planning to recovery, and to address capacity gaps that could hinder their ability to respond to crises.

Clarification of Emergency Declarations for Agriculture

The OFA supports clarifying processes for emergency declarations and assistance requests. To strengthen Ontario's emergency framework, we recommend explicitly including agricultural emergencies as valid grounds for municipal declarations and provincial assistance. Recognizing events such as crop diseases, livestock health crises, and extreme weather impacts within the declaration criteria will ensure that agricultural concerns are prioritized in emergency planning and responses.

OFA appreciates the opportunity to provide our agricultural perspective on ERO 019-9467: Bill 238, Emergency Management Modernization Act, 2024: Proposed amendments to the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. By addressing these recommendations, OFA believes Ontario can modernize its emergency management framework to better protect the agricultural sector, ensure food security, and promote resilient rural communities.

Sincerely,



Drew Spoelstra
President

cc: Hon. Trevor Jones, Associate Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response
Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan, Minister of Emergency Preparedness
Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of Ontario
Hon. Rob Flack, Minister, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness
OFA Board of Directors

*This submission has been approved by OFA Board of Directors and will be posted to OFA's website:
<https://ofa.on.ca/resources>.*