

November 22, 2025

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Provincial Planning Branch
13th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3

Re: Consultation on simplifying and standardizing official plans (ERO 025-1099)

Dear Planning Consultation Team,

Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) appreciates the Ministry's initiative to simplify, standardize, and modernize municipal official plans so they become shorter, more transparent, and more consistent. Improved alignment across all levels of government is essential as Ontario continues reducing red tape and removing barriers to agricultural productivity.

A streamlined provincial approach to land designations will directly benefit agricultural operations by reducing classification inconsistencies. We strongly emphasize that agricultural land remains a single, clearly protected category as currently proposed, without unnecessary sub-division that may create ambiguity or subject farms to non-agricultural requirements.

Greenhouses are agriculture, and we respectfully request that this be stated explicitly within the policy materials. OGVG members have repeatedly faced inconsistent municipal interpretations, particularly where greenhouse operations have been treated as commercial or industrial uses due to their adoption of high-tech systems and on-farm warehousing. These support activities are essential to agricultural production, especially given that greenhouse vegetable farms harvest up to 20 times more per acre than traditional field agriculture.

These misinterpretations have, in some municipalities, resulted in inappropriate bylaws and development charges applied to agricultural greenhouse farms. Clear and explicit inclusion of greenhouses under agricultural land designations will help ensure municipalities apply policies consistently and avoid placing farms in regulatory "category limbo."

Ontario's greenhouse vegetable sector continues to be a major contributor to the provincial economy. The sector has grown at approximately 5% annually over the past decade and now contributes \$2.4 billion GDP each year. OGVG represents 170 farming families operating more than 4,300 acres of tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers, supporting over 35,000 high-quality jobs across the value chain. Continued growth depends on the province maintaining consistent and predictable definitions of agricultural land and agricultural activity.

Improving transparency and aligning land-use designations will also help attract new investment that is often deterred by uncertainty, such as when agricultural land is unexpectedly subject to non-agricultural development charges or interpreted as mixed-use. Clearer definitions and uniform application across municipalities are essential first steps toward the Ministry's goals.

OGVG members appreciate the commitment to supporting agricultural growth and strengthening infrastructure planning. We look forward to continued collaboration and to supporting initiatives that enable greenhouse agriculture and Ontario's broader agri-food economy to thrive.

We remain available to provide additional information.

Sincerely,



Richard Lee

Executive Director