



November 14, 2025

Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade  
College Park  
777 Bay Street, 18th floor  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2N4

***Sent via Ontario Regulatory Registry***

To whom it may concern,

***Re: Submission on proposed special economic zones criteria***

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Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed for Special Economic Zones Criteria. BFO represents 19,000 beef farmers in Ontario by advocating in the areas of policy planning, industry development and research, environmental sustainability, animal health and welfare, and domestic and export market development.

BFO recognizes the provincial government's efforts to stimulate investment, economic growth, and job creation through the proposed *Special Economic Zones Act*. We understand the importance of creating a competitive environment that attracts innovation and new industries to Ontario. However, it must not come at the cost of Ontario's agricultural land as it is a finite and non-renewable resource that underpins food security, the agri-food economy, and rural communities.

Strong safeguards must be implemented to protect agricultural land during the SEZ designation process. SEZs should avoid prime agricultural lands, the Greenbelt, and lands forming part of the agricultural land base. They must also avoid any disruption to the agri-food network and the broader agricultural system. All potential impacts must be rigorously evaluated through a comprehensive agricultural assessment. Additionally designated projects should be strictly limited to nation-building initiatives and natural resource operations.

Exemptions must not weaken existing protections related to water, soil, environmental quality, or animal health. Where impacts are unavoidable, measures should be taken to mitigate effects on farms—such as noise, traffic, and environmental disruption. Consideration should also be given to incorporating specific provisions for agriculture within the regulatory framework. Additionally, criteria for identifying "trusted proponents" should reflect a clear commitment to agricultural sector interests, supporting fairness, transparency, and responsible development.

The regulatory framework must be transparent with clearly defined decision-making processes. BFO urges decision-makers to adopt policies that balance investment and economic growth with

agricultural preservation, ensuring Ontario's ability to produce food and support rural communities for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig McLaughlin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Craig McLaughlin

President