# Norfolk County Logo Norfolk County

Development and Cultural Services Division

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Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

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Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

RE: Proposed Bill 66, *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018*

To Whom It May Concern:

On December 6, 2018 Bill 66, *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018*, passed its first reading at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. The window for review and opportunity to comment on the proposed Bill 66 ends January 20, 2019.

Norfolk County has reviewed the proposed Bill 66, and offer the following comments:

Request for confirmation:

1. Please confirm how the policy would be implemented. The information provided through the public consultation process is not clear.

Planning policy considerations:

1. Land-use planning should be viewed as an essential part of the municipal development process and should not be viewed in isolation from the other important processes such as social and economic planning.

**All legislation should be considered in review of approving an Open-for-Business Planning By-law.**

1. Public participation - Public participation in local decision-making is fundamental to the democratic process. More recently, Bill 73, the *Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015*, amended the *Planning Act* to include requirements around improving public participation by requiring municipalities to initiate a Planning Advisory Committee (PAC). The purpose of establishing a PAC was to help facilitate greater collaboration and exchange of ideas between council/public, increase citizen representations, and ensure that land use advice provided to councils includes citizen perspectives. Bill 66, *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018*, proposes to remove the requirement for public consultation in some instances, which flies in the face of the intent of the recent changes created by the *Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015.*

**Public participation should not be removed from the approval process as it violates the democratic process and undermines the intent of the *Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015*.**

1. Servicing Capacity - Norfolk County is presently developing a Servicing Monitoring program to be able to identify servicing capacity within urban areas across the County.

**The implementation of an Open-for-Business By-law as it is presented today may have major implications on servicing capacity within Norfolk County’s urban areas. All new development should have adequate servicing available prior to approval.**

1. Source Water Protection

**The implementation of an Open-for-Business By-law as it is presented today may have major implications on source water protection within the County. All new development should be subject to the County’s source water protection policies.**

1. Prime Agricultural Lands - All of Norfolk County has been designated as prime agricultural lands as defined by the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2014*. Ontario's prime agricultural areas are finite, scarce, non-renewable resources. They are the foundation of local food production, agri-food exports and the growing bio-economy, and are a significant contributor to jobs and economic prosperity in Norfolk County.

**An Open-for-Business By-law should consider the protection of prime agricultural areas and of the unique agricultural based economy generated within Norfolk County’s prime agricultural areas.**

1. Inclusiveness
   1. Allow other industries to utilize the Open-for-Business By-law
   2. Allow expanding businesses to utilize Open-for-Business By-law
   3. Include provisions for small businesses

**An Open-for-Business By-law could be applicable to other types and sizes of businesses and include businesses looking to expand operations.**

1. Timelines - the Province released the draft Bill 66, *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018* on December 6th, 2018. The public consultation process is scheduled for 45-days, ending on 11:59 p.m. January 20, 2019. 45 days is not enough time for Norfolk County to fully digest the implications of Bill 66.

**Norfolk County requests that the public consultation period regarding Bill 66 be extended to a full 120 days in order to provide Norfolk County and other Ontario municipalities the opportunity to fully understand the implications of the proposed Bill 66.**

Thank you,

Norfolk County