

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Food Safety and Environmental Policy Branch

1 Stone Road West, 2nd Floor SW

Guelph, ON N1G 4Y2

c/o Sara Peckford

Delivered vis email

Re: Drainage Act Discussion Paper

The Niagara Federation of Agriculture is an agricultural organization with over 1400 farm family members. Niagara offers the most diversified area of food production in all of Canada and agriculture has proven to be the economic mainstay in Niagara. The mandate of the Federation is to promote and protect agriculture in the Niagara Peninsula through lobby and communication efforts. The Niagara Federation of Agriculture is affiliated with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture who represents over 38,000 farm family members.

The directors of the Niagara Federation of Agriculture have reviewed the Drainage Act Discussion Paper and would like to thank the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for the opportunity to comment on the discussion paper. Please review our comments below.

* There is concern about the soil dumping that has been happening in many of the municipalities in Niagara. This soil dumping is changing the landscape of the land which changes the way the land drains resulting in flooding or blocking of natural water courses. At this time, soil and debris are not being monitored or tested for toxic substances. As development increases, what plan is there for the excess soil and debris that is the byproduct of the developments?
* Municipalities have informed the federation that municipal ditches are not developed to drain agriculture land, but they should be maintained so they do not impede the natural flow into the municipal ditch resulting in flooding. There is also a concern about the increased growth of phragmites in the ditches and wet areas. This invasive species is blocking ditches resulting in the flooding of fields and woodlots. It is up to the municipality to maintain their ditches and culverts. Niagara Federation of Agriculture requests that the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs increase its efforts to raise awareness of drainage related rights and responsibilities, as well as guide property owners on how to address drainage related concerns
* Creeks and tributaries are also not being maintained which causes flooding, resulting in an increase of mapped watershed areas. These mapped watershed areas are used when determining setbacks of farm building development and buffer zones. Because of the lack of maintenance, agriculture producers are losing soil through erosion and nutrients in the soil.

The Niagara Federation of Agriculture appreciates the commitment of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to the agriculture industry and look forward to continuing working with the ministry in its goal in developing a stronger agriculture industry for the next generation. If you require further information please contact me at chrishamilton4OFA@gmail.com

Sincerely,



Chris Hamilton

President

Niagara Federation of Agriculture