July 31, 2023

The Honourable Steve Clark

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

17th Floor

777 Bay Street

Toronto, ON

M7A 2J3

*Submitted online through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO 019-6813)*

**Re: Review of proposed policies adapted from *A Place to Grow* and *Provincial Policy Statement* to form a new provincial planning policy instrument – Submission from** **Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission**

Dear Minister Clark,

Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission (OBHECC) is the representative body for the many farmers and hatcheries that serve the needs of the entire chicken value chain. Our sector produced and marketed in 2022 approximately 284 million hatching eggs and 263 million chicks valued at approximately $437million. We are a key contributor to the value of the chicken sector as it serves the needs of Ontario consumers for a wholesome and affordable source of meat protein. In 2021, Ontario's poultry sector contributed approximately $1.8 billion to the province's economy.

OBHECC thanks the Ontario government for listening to concerns raised during the original consultation period for *Bill 97 – Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023* and extending the process to allow for continued dialogue. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed policies adapted from *A Place to Grow* and *Provincial Policy Statement* to form a new provincial planning policy instrument.

Protecting the “Right to Farm,” as outlined in the *Farming and Food Production Protection Act*, *1998* is very important to our farmers and hatcheries – it is important that we collectively seek opportunities to ensure balance between the needs of the agricultural community and provincial health, safety and environmental issues and concerns.

We support and embrace the government’s objective of building 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years to address a housing supply shortfall that affects all Ontarians – including our farming communities. However, we need a balanced approach to policy and proposal development to ensure the continued strength of the agri-food sector, supporting economic growth and ensuring an efficient and reliable food supply for all Ontarians.

To ensure continued viability of agricultural production, we support the existing *2020 Provincial Policy Statement* that requires municipalities to protect their prime agricultural areas for long-term agricultural use. However, we encourage the provincial government to review the definition of prime agricultural lands. As with many of our provincial counterparts, we recommend that prime agricultural lands be defined as Class 1-6 plus specialty crop lands. Classes 4-6 support agricultural activities such as grazing livestock and growing crops, and the agriculture sector has demonstrated that the productivity of this land can be improved through activities such as tile drainage, removing stone and addition of lime, just to name a few. With respect to specialty crop land, provincial policy should continue to protect these areas because they are scarce and unique and cannot be replenished. These lands are important economically and represent some of Ontario's highest earning agricultural lands.

In addition, we supportmaintaining and expanding the use of a provincially-mapped Agricultural System to ensure we still have farmland to produce food for future generations of Ontarians. This will ensure prime agricultural and specialty crop lands are consistently mapped and protected throughout Ontario, supporting economic development and job creation across the entire agri-food value chain.

Land use planning in Ontario must balance opportunities for increased housing with the need to preserve our agricultural lands. Focusing growth in existing settlement areas will support local economies, build stronger communities, reduce loss of valuable farmland and land use conflicts.

Once again, we thank you for your willingness to continue the dialogue to hear the concerns brought forward by the entire agriculture and agri-food sector, and your desire to work together to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture, while ensuring affordable housing is available for Ontarians.

In closing, we thank you for the opportunity to provide input for your consideration as part of the consultation process. Please do not hesitate to contact myself or our Executive Director Bill Van Heeswyk (billv@obhecc.com (519) 837-0005) should you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



William Bearss P.Ag.

Chair

cc: The Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs