

May 1, 2024

Scott Sterling
Senior Policy Advisor
Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Provincial Planning Policy Branch
777 Bay Street, 13th floor
Toronto, ON
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Submitted via email to Scott.Sterling@ontario.ca and online through the websites of Ontario's Regulatory Registry and the Environmental Registry of Ontario

Dear Scott Sterling,

RE: Proposed Changes to Regulations under the *Planning Act* and *Development Charges Act, 1997* Relating to the Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024 (Bill 185): Newspaper Notice Requirements and Consequential Housekeeping Changes (Regulatory Registry # 24-MMAH012 and Environmental Registry of Ontario # 019-8370)

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) appreciates this opportunity to provide input with respect to the proposed regulatory changes to modernize public notice requirements under the *Planning Act* and *Development Charges Act, 1997*.

OFA is the largest general farm organization in Ontario, proudly representing more than 38,000 farm family members across the province. OFA has a strong voice for our members and the agri-food industry on issues, legislation and regulations governed by all levels of government. We are passionate and dedicated to ensuring the agri-food sector and our rural communities are included, consulted, and considered in any new and changing legislation that impacts the sustainability and growth of our farm businesses.

Summary:

- OFA supports modernizing public notice requirements, recognizing that many communities no longer have a community newspaper.
- OFA recommends requiring municipalities to offer the public the opportunity to sign-up for email notifications and notify those who have signed up when additional notices are added to a municipal website.

We understand that under the proposed changes to regulations made under the *Planning Act* would provide municipalities with an additional manner of giving notice, when notice is required to be given, to meet the statutory land use planning notice requirements. In addition to other ways of giving notice, municipalities would be able to provide notice on a municipal website if there is no local print newspaper available. Additionally, this proposal includes regulatory changes to enable municipalities to give notice of a proposed new/amending Development Charge or

Community Benefit Charges by-law or passage of a by-law on a municipal website, if a local newspaper is not available, by amending regulations under the *Development Charges Act, 1997* and the *Planning Act*.

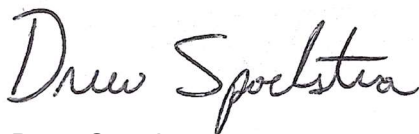
We agree that public consultation is a central and mandatory element of Ontario's land use planning system. It provides an opportunity for the local community to share input, including attending public meetings, expressing views on development proposals, and participating in policy development.

OFA supports modernizing public notice requirements, recognizing that many communities no longer have a community newspaper. No question, posting detailed information about proposed planning applications and proposed by-laws on a municipal website will be useful to individuals seeking more information. However, unlike a notice in a community newspaper, an individual would typically not visit a municipal website on a regular basis unless they anticipated new information would be posted.

Although municipal websites can be used effectively to share information, they are not as useful in notifying the public that new information is available. Therefore, OFA recommends that in addition to modernizing how notice can be provided through municipal websites, municipalities should also be required to offer the public the opportunity to sign-up for email notifications and notify those who have signed up when additional notices are added to a municipal website.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,



Drew Spoelstra
President

cc: OFA Board of Directors