

Monica Hawkins

From: Michael Marchant <mmarchantofa@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 8, 2020 5:50 PM
To: Monica Hawkins
Subject: RE: Bill 156, Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act
Attachments: Letter to Municipalities - Bill 156.docx; Bill 156 speaking notes via OFA.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

RE: Bill 156, *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act*

The **East Nipissing Parry Sound Federation of Agriculture (ENPSFA)** represents the voice of agriculture in the local community, and advocates on behalf of our farm family members. Along with our Commodity partners in **East Ferris Township** and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the ENPSFA is committed to a sustainable and profitable future for farm families.

Ontario farms have increasingly come under threat of unwanted trespassers and activists who are illegally entering property, barns and buildings, seizing private property and threatening the health and safety of the farm, employees, livestock and crops.

On December 2nd, 2019, the provincial government introduced Bill 156, *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2019*. The bill is intended to protect Ontario farm animals, farms, farmers and their families, and the safety of the entire food supply by addressing the ongoing threat of unwanted trespassing and from unauthorized interactions with farm animals. The risks of these actions include exposing farm animals to stress and potential diseases, as well as the introducing contaminants into the food supply.

The ENPSFA, appreciates the support from the provincial government for taking a strong stance to protect our farms and food safety, and introducing more significant consequences for illegal trespassing activities.

The ENPSFA is calling on all municipal councils in the province to reassure their citizens that the safety of Ontario farm animals, farmers and farm families, and the safety of the entire food system matters. We respectfully ask that your council show your support for Bill 156 by sending the following letter (see below) to Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Ernie Hardeman.

If you have already indicated to Minister Hardeman your support for Bill 156, we thank you for your initiative!

Thank you for showing your support for stronger legislation to protect Ontario farms, animals, and food from intruders.

Sincerely,

East Nipissing Parry Sound Federation of Agriculture

Tuesday, February 4, 2020

Sample letter to Minister Hardeman:

Hon. Ernie Hardeman
Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
77 Grenville Street, 11th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1B3

Via Email: minister.omafra@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Hardeman,

Ontario farms have come under increasing threat from trespassers and activists who illegally enter property, barns and buildings, causing significant disruptions to the entire agri-food sector. These activists are trespassing under false pretenses to gain entry on to farm properties. They have seized private property and threatened the health and safety of Ontario farms, employees, livestock and crops. These individuals and organizations are causing health and safety concerns and undue stress to Ontario farmers, their families, and their businesses. Once peaceful protests have escalated to trespassing, invading, barn break-ins and harassment. These incidents distress farmers, their families and employees, and threaten the health of livestock and crops when activists breach biosecurity protocols, ultimately putting the entire food system at risk.

We strongly support the new proposed legislation, *Bill 156: Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act*. This new legislation is an important way to keep our farm and food supply safe for all Ontarians. Bill 156 provides a balanced approach to protecting farms while recognizing a citizen's right to protest. This new legislation will ensure farm businesses have a legal standing to protect their farm, family and employees, livestock, crops and ultimately the entire food system. *Bill 156: Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act* is good news for Ontario's agri-food industry.

Thank you for this important new legislation. Protection of our Ontario should be the highest priority.

Sincerely,

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Michael Marchant

Secretary / NE PAC
OFA - East Nipissing / Parry Sound District
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Bill 156 - the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act*, 2019

KEY PROVISIONS OF BILL 156:

- addresses efforts to compromise on-farm biosecurity
- the Bill designates “animal protection zones” (e.g. barns) where animals are kept and prohibits any entrance into them on farms without clear and informed prior permission
- also prohibits interfering with transport vehicles (e.g. blocking trucks) - animal protection zone rules will also apply to livestock transport vehicles and to animal processing facilities
- enhances trespass protection – requires “prior consent” that is informed and not obtained through false pretenses
- applies even if the trespasser has not been told orally, or in writing, to keep out, or even if no signs have been posted
- deters so called “under cover investigations” by activists; the 2-year limitation period as well as the requirements for prior consent that is informed and not obtained through false pretenses
- higher penalties for violations; up to \$15,000 for a first offense; up to \$25,000 for subsequent offenses that will hopefully serve as an effective deterrent
- persons found guilty can also be assessed restitution for any losses or damages, in addition to above fines; which is positive

PURPOSES OF BILL 156:

- eliminate or reduce the unique risks created when individuals trespass on farms or interfere with farm animals, including the risk of exposing farm animals to disease and stress as well as the risk of introducing contaminants to the food supply
- protect farm animals and the food supply



- protect the safety of farmers, their families and persons working in or on farms, animal processing premises and drivers of livestock or poultry transport vehicles

TIMELINES:

- Bill 156 was introduced December 2nd
- has had 2 days of "Second Reading" debate
- Second Reading debate will likely resume after the legislature resumes sitting on February 18th
- soon after that, we can expect Bill 156 to be sent to one of the Legislature's Standing Committees for public hearings

THOUGHTS:

- Bill 156 is not an ag gag bill. It ensures food security though the value chain is protected while allowing individual's right to protest as long as it is done in a legal manner
- anyone who believes animals are in distress, or being abused, should call 1-833-9-ANIMAL (264625) any time and report it
- private individuals are not trained to determine distress or abuse; the provincial animal welfare inspectors are trained to do this
- private individuals are not expected to collect evidence of a possible violation; the provincial animal welfare inspectors and the police are trained to do this
- sitting on video for six months or more doesn't serve the interests and welfare of the animals; they're potentially exposed to ongoing distress or abuse by delayed "reporting"; not an action a truly caring person would take
- activists aren't really interested in the welfare of farm animals; their goal is to end animal agriculture, eating meat, wearing fur and leather as well as any use of animals for any purpose, even companion animals and service animals

December 6, 2019

What the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act* means to Ontario farmers

There's a troubling escalation of trespassing onto Ontario farms. The introduction of Bill 156 – the new proposed legislation, *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act* – is designed to protect Ontario farms and animals from intruders.

Our farms are places of business, growing and producing food, raising animals and making a living. But it's also our home and the same place we raise our families and play with our children. You can't just walk into someone else's home without permission. And the same laws and rules should apply to farm businesses. Existing laws were not doing enough to protect our farms and our homes from the risk of invasion.

Ontario farms have increasingly come under threat of unwanted trespassers and activists who are illegally entering property, barns and buildings, seizing private property and threatening the health and safety of the farm, employees, livestock and crops. It has resulted in farmers, their families and employees becoming increasingly frightened and frustrated. These activities are causing serious threats to the mental health and wellbeing of Ontario farmers. In most cases, farmers and their families live on their farms, making this ongoing threat even greater, exposing families to perpetrators. It's a concern for our own personal safety and the safety of our families and employees.

Some special interest groups have voiced opposition to the new legislation and suggest that the proposed changes will somehow hide how Ontario's farm families produce food for Ontarians. This is not the case. In fact, all animal production is governed by strict codes of practice to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all animals. Livestock farmers are required to satisfy standards of care requirements outlined under national codes of practice which ensure that animal health, safety, and welfare are promoted and maintained. In addition, farmers are required by law to follow the practices outlined under the *Provincial Animal Welfare Service Act* which sets out strict animal care requirements, the oversight duties and powers of enforcement agents, and penalty structures for offenders found to be in contravention of the Act.

Bill 156 is intended to protect farms and food safety, and is welcomed news to Ontario farmers because illegal trespassing and stealing private property from our farms is not okay. This type of behaviour isn't acceptable in any other business environment. This new legislation will finally allow farmers to operate their businesses without the fear of special interest groups and activities attempting to disrupt their farms, families and way of life with no legal repercussions.

And it's more than just a disruption, it's a biosecurity threat. Breaches in biosecurity puts the health and welfare of our animals and our food supply at risk. Unwanted visitors and guests have the potential to

bring in diseases that could infect or kill an entire barn full of animals or contaminate water and food supply inside a food processing facility. This legislation helps Ontario's agri-food sector protect against those risks.

The *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act* is good news for Ontario's agri-food industry. It provides a balanced approach to protecting farms while recognizing a citizen's right to protest. This new legislation will ensure farm businesses have a legal standing to protect their farm, family and employees, livestock, crops and ultimately the entire food supply.

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Signed, in partnership, by:

Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Beef Farmers of Ontario
Egg Farmers of Ontario
Chicken Farmers of Ontario
Ontario Sheep Farmers
Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg & Chick Commission
Veal Farmers of Ontario
Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
Ontario Pork
Turkey Farmers of Ontario