



Ontario Tender Fruit Growers

PRESENTATION TO THE DC TASKFORCE

MAY 19TH, 2022

Who We are

The Ontario Tender Fruit Growers represents over 190 family farms growing peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots, pears and cherries on approx. 9,000 acres - primarily located in the Niagara Region.



Why are we here?

- We recently found out that there is a proposal to remove the “agricultural use” exemption entirely from the 2022 renewal of the regional development charge by-law
- Prior to a brief presentation at APAC, without any details on how agriculture was going to be treated in the future, we had no knowledge of this proposal, nor did any other agricultural group
- The previous renewal of the by-law in 2017, removed the exemption for on farm accommodations- also without consultation with agriculture



What is the impact to our growers?

- Based on this exemption removal, a tender fruit barn that was built a few years ago, if designated as “commercial” under the new rate schematic it would cost the grower over \$250,000 in development charges alone.
- Multi-generational family farms with sons and daughters eventually taking over, cannot afford this, cannot pass this cost along to consumers, and therefore will not be able to grow and prosper on this land that is protected under provincial legislation for future generations



What protects this land for the community and for our future?

The Provincial Policy Statement

- Prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture.
- Planning authorities shall designate prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas in accordance with guidelines developed by the Province, as amended from time to time.
- Planning authorities are encouraged to use an agricultural system approach to maintain and enhance the geographic continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the agri-food network.

What protects this land for the community and for our future?

The Greenbelt

The Greenbelt is a broad band of permanently protected land which:

- Protects against the loss and fragmentation of the agricultural land base and supports agriculture as the predominant land use.

Vision and Goals

Agricultural Viability and Protection

- a) Protection of the specialty crop area land base while allowing agriculture-supportive infrastructure and value-added uses necessary for sustainable agricultural uses and activities.
- d) Provision of the appropriate flexibility to allow for agricultural, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses, normal farm practices and an evolving agricultural and rural economy.
- e) Increasing certainty for the agricultural sector to foster long-term investment in the agri-food network and improvement to and management of the agricultural land base.

What protects this land for the community and for our future?

The Niagara Official Plan

- ♦ The Region's agricultural system and natural environment system, provide a significant contribution to Niagara's resilience and ability to adapt to climate change. The agricultural land base will be protected for the provision of healthy, local food for present and future generations. Farming will be productive, diverse, and sustainable.

What is our ask?

- That the Regional Development Charges Policy Task Force reverse their current recommendation to council
- That the agricultural exemption using the full definition of agricultural use including accommodation for farm labour be imbedded in the DC Bylaw and all future renewals

Thank you

