

March 11, 2020

Delivered Electronically

Hon. Ernie Hardeman
Minister
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
11th Flr, 77 Grenville St
Toronto, ON
M7A 1B3

Hon. Mr. Hardeman,

Re: Guidelines Needed to Reduce Cannabis Facility Land Use Conflicts

The purpose of this letter is to request the development of Provincial guidelines to reduce cannabis facility land use conflicts.

Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production is the highest grossing agricultural industry in Niagara, with a GDP impact of \$691 million. The industry is well-established locally; however, the addition of cannabis as a crop has presented new regulatory challenges particularly related to siting facilities and operational considerations.

There are opportunities for improved approaches to land-use planning that would ensure licensed facilities are appropriately situated and regulated within the region to leverage the significant investment, value and job creation opportunities associated with the cannabis industry. The development of a set of land use guidelines pertaining to this crop is necessary to support both the industry and communities.

At a recent workshop with local municipal stakeholders and elected officials, land-use issues related to odour and light emissions as well as concerns pertaining to outdoor cropping of cannabis were discussed to compare approaches being applied across local area municipalities that support the industry.

This session confirmed that approaches are inconsistent among municipalities. Feedback from the stakeholders identified the need for the development of Provincial guidance materials, such as factsheets, pertaining to cannabis cultivation and production. The following topics were highlighted as priority items for inclusion in guidance materials:

- clarification on licensing and enforcement options for municipalities;
- standards and thresholds for odour and lighting emissions;
- best management practices for cannabis cultivation and production facilities; and

- land use compatibility (similar to MDS, or D Series Guidelines).

The creation of guidance materials to inform cannabis cultivation and production represents an opportunity to add clarity, efficiency and consistency across the province in this area, to the benefit of growers, producers, local municipalities and their residents.

The Region understands that some of the above materials may already be in development, and encourages the Ministry to support the development of additional materials as suggested.

The Region would also be pleased to participate in any technical advisory groups or consultations with respect to any topics related to cannabis land use, including guidance materials or proposed regulations.

Sincerely,

Diana Huson
Regional Councillor
Chair, Planning and Economic Development
Committee

Rino Mostacci, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner,
Planning and Development Services

cc:

Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Jim Bradley, Regional Chair, Niagara Region
Sam Oosterhoff, MPP Niagara West