

April 6, 2022

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Via Ontario Legislative Assembly Online Submission Portal

RE: Bill 106 (*Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act, 2022*)

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) appreciates the opportunity to share our perspective on Bill 106, the Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act, specifically the components related to the *Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act* and the *Ontario Food Terminal Act*.

The Food Terminal and OMAFRA play a key role in enabling this province's agriculture sector to produce and distribute the food we grow for Ontario's population.

We welcome the proposed legislative changes in Bill 106 to give these two institutions more tools to support the agriculture sector and to protect Ontario's food supply chain through future emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are encouraged by the prospect of progress on existing policy impediments to food production that could be achieved with the proposed legislation, including the concerning current lack of a food security lens in local public health decisions.

We also view the proposed legislation as an important foundation upon which to undertake an extensive review and streamlining of red tape and regulatory burden affecting Ontario's agriculture sector and which has lately grown exponentially, in large part driven by the urgency of the pandemic.

We encourage the government and OMAFRA in particular to engage with the OFVGA on how this enabling legislation can be harnessed into policy actions that will eliminate obstacles to our domestic food production, eliminate red tape and give growers the tools to contribute to a thriving Ontario economy while being the backbone of our province's food sovereignty.

Sincerely,



Charles Stevens
Chair, OFVGA Board



About the OFVGA:

OFVGA represents more than 3,500 fruit and vegetable farmers in Ontario. Our sector generates more than \$2.7 billion in economic activity and employs more than 30,000 people directly on-farm, with an additional 66,000 jobs generated throughout the value chain.