



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES

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June 8, 2010

To: Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition (OASC)
Re: Support for Local Food Production

I want to say thank-you to all of your member organizations for continuing to advocate on behalf of Ontario farmers; I always appreciate hearing from your organizations. I want to briefly address the proposals outlined in your recent correspondence to my office regarding business risk management programs.

First, as always I have and will continue to carry your message forward to the Federal Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Gerry Ritz, who I know also appreciates your organizations' work on the ground with farmers and the valuable input you provide in the policy process.

However I want to remind all of you that, as I have stated previously, changes to the National Framework of Business Risk Management Programs have traditionally required 7 of the 10 provinces to agree to those changes. For any changes to take place the Province of Ontario needs to show leadership and come to an agreement with other provinces. It is my understanding that the current Framework agreement requires unanimous consent for any amendments to be made. Therefore, to change the joint Federal-Provincial framework we need co-operation from the provinces; the federal government on its own cannot dictate to the provinces what the programs should look like.

The Minister has been very clear that the federal government can only fund programs within the agreed upon National Framework, this will not change regardless of any changes in government. It was the position of previous Liberal governments, and it is the position of the current Conservative government that we must work within a National program to ensure that we do not open up Canada to unnecessary trade challenges and countervail tariffs.

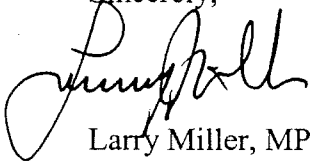
I have recently heard from many farmers both in Ontario and across Canada and many have said that they think the programs work just fine and that our focus should instead be on developing trade, removing barriers, regulations, and investing in science, research and innovation. We also heard from many producers who want us to simply address these issues and "get out of the way".

I of course appreciate being kept apprised of your policy goals but I want to encourage you to focus your greater efforts on finding common ground with a sufficient number of your provincial agriculture colleagues and provincial governments before pressing for changes to the National Framework.

Only at that time will the Federal Government be able to attempt to make changes to the business risk management suite of programs.

I look forward to having further discussions on business risk management with your organizations in the future after you have reviewed your policies and come to an agreement with associations and provinces across the country. I will gladly work to facilitate these discussions in whatever manner you see as appropriate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry Miller', written in a cursive style.

Larry Miller, MP
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound