



November 27th, 2017

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne

Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Main Legislative Building Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1
kwynne.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

Re: Angus Tree Seed Plant Closure

Dear Premier Wynne:

We, the Council and residents of North Grenville are deeply concerned about the August 2017 announcement by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) that the Tree Seed Plant in Angus is scheduled for closure in September 2018.

We have very specific, immediate concerns about the repercussions that this decision will have on our community as it represents a contradiction with Ontario's climate change strategy. Under the Plan's Agriculture, Forests and Land Action Area it states that:

"Ontario's goal is to ensure natural, agricultural, and forested lands are used in ways that are efficient and sustainable and enhance the removal and storage of carbon from the atmosphere."

Due to their ability to remove carbon from the atmosphere, Ontario's agriculture, forestry, lands, and resource recovery sectors will be able to supply carbon offsets to the cap and trade market, providing made-in-Ontario compliance options for emitters." Climate Change Action Plan

How will your government ensure that there will be sufficient supplies of high quality, locally adapted tree seed of native species?

How will your government facilitate the implementation of a critical adaptive strategy, to ensure our forests will be able to provide the environmental services our society's welfare depends on?

Specifically, we are deeply concerned that the Tree Seed Plant closure decision:

- was made without public consultation;
- was made without sufficient analysis of its impact on Ontario communities;
- takes Ontario in a direction opposite to jurisdictions who recognize tree seed processing and banking as an essential social service to help adapt to climate change;
- does not recognize that the private sector alone cannot undertake this significant and necessary challenge to ensure the resilience of Ontario's forests;
- seriously constrains private sector growers' ability to follow government seed policy as per the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act* and the 50 Million Tree Program's objectives; and
- is being enacted too quickly to develop short and long-term options that will provide seed for reforestation practitioners, and ensure the quality of the seed currently in storage.

As you are aware Madame Premier, the Municipality of North Grenville is poised to acquire the majestic 100-year-old Kemptville Campus for the purpose of transforming this long-time Provincial asset into an education and community hub, focusing on climate change adaptation and low-carbon innovation. Our inspiration in moving forward with this project originates from the creation of the Ferguson Forest Centre (FFC) located in Kemptville and named after former Premier G. Howard Ferguson, a native son of this community.

The Municipality, along with its current partners in the education and community hub project (i.e. 4 local school boards, the Ryan's Well Foundation, etc.) and the many other organizations that we are currently in discussion with, have expressed a desire to align themselves with the FFC and incorporate its purpose in their programming and/or business model. In short, the FFC constitutes a significant element of the Kemptville Campus education and community hub business plan.

The announced closure of Ontario's seed plant in Angus will bear significant challenges for the FFC which could lead to further employment loss in North Grenville as did the closure of Kemptville College. Not only will this impact both direct and indirect jobs in our community, it will also ignore three years of hard work to seek to renew the Campus and bring back the jobs that were lost.

There is great urgency for the FFC to address short-term options:

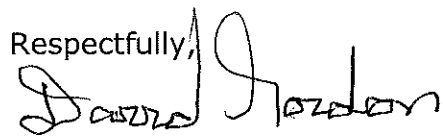
- for moving their seed, currently in storage at the OTSP, to other secure, expert banking facilities, which currently don't exist in Ontario;
- for seed processing, needed annually and as early as June 2018 for some species; and
- to obtain the rare and highly skilled seed processing, banking and testing expertise that results in high quality seed which can be banked and made available over the long term (decades) to support climate change forest adaptation strategies.

Simply put Madame Premier, without the FFC, the Kemptville Campus education and community hub will be severely impacted with respect to meeting our climate change adaptation and low carbon innovation objectives.

We respectfully and urgently request that:

1. **A Stakeholder Committee be constituted immediately** that would include: Forests Ontario, Sustainable Forest Licensees, growers, OMNRF's partners in forest genetic resource management, local community groups (AWARE Essa, Friends of the Utopia Mill & Park), representatives of MOECC and OMAFRA, and OMNRF seed policy staff;
2. **The Stakeholder Committee report no later than 4 months** from the date of it being constituted; the report to outline potential alternate modes of delivery, including via a non-profit entity, with the objective of possibly relieving on-going operating expenses presently incurred by the Government of Ontario with regards to this facility;
3. **Any and all actions on the closure of the Ontario Tree Seed Facility be immediately put on hold** pending the outcome of a consultative process; and
4. **That an emergency meeting be convened, as soon as possible, through your offices, with the above representatives and yourselves.**

The MNRF has an opportunity to engage stakeholders in a meaningful consultation process that will result in solutions to this urgent challenge; solutions that must involve government support and oversight, but most importantly, leadership, on behalf of all of Ontario.

Respectfully,


David Gordon Mayor

Copy:

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