



Waterloo Federation of Agriculture

Waterloo Federation of Agriculture WFA.
February 19, 2025.

GRCA Chair, John Challinor.
GRCA Vice-Chair, Shawn Watters.
GRCA Board of Directors.

Re: Public appointments secretariat, appointment to GRCA Board.

The Waterloo Federation of Agriculture has endeavoured to represent the interests of the farmers of Waterloo Region for over 90 years. For most of these years we have had an exemplary relationship with the GRCA.

Our partnership with GRCA in the Rural Water Quality Program (RWQP) has resulted in more than \$20 million in total capital projects and is the template for collaborative water quality improvement programs in North America.

The RWQP demonstrates an incredibly successful partnership between farmers and urban communities working with the GRCA and the Region of Waterloo. These voluntary, private land stewardship projects provide water quality benefits to individual properties, the Region of Waterloo, downstream communities and the general health of Lake Erie. Farmers keep nutrients and soil on their land so that they don't become pollutants for water users downstream.

The RWQP is just one example of how farmers have worked together with the GRCA to pool resources and be better stewards of our precious water resources.

Your commitment to working with us through outreach, sharing of financial resources and extension continues to be appreciated. Many Conservation Authorities in Ontario have less than stellar relationships with their agricultural communities. Fortunately that has not been the case in Waterloo Region and we thank you for being such good partners.

Recently, the Province of Ontario gave selected Conservation Authorities the opportunity to add an agricultural sector representative to their Boards. The WFA firmly supports this measure, and thanks the government of Ontario for taking this important step to ensure that agricultural needs are represented in our watersheds. It is important that, even though some representatives on local Conservation Boards "may" have some level of agricultural experience, there be a dedicated point person tasked to look at issues through an agricultural lens. It is entirely different from municipal responsibility, which must balance the needs of all ratepayers in an area.

Additionally, there is never any guarantee that a municipal representative will be re-elected. Farmers make up less than 2% of the population, yet the land that we utilize covers the vast majority of the watershed.

We have learned that an individual from Dufferin County has applied for a position on the GRCA Board.. This beef and sheep pasture farmer is widely recognized, not only in Dufferin county, but in the province for his innovative farming practices, and his respect for the soil, water, flora and fauna that he stewards on his farm. We can attest that he is a well-spoken

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professional and will be an exceptional, common-sense representative for the farm community as a whole.

The Waterloo Federation of Agriculture believes that the addition of an agricultural representative would demonstrate GRCA's commitment to continuing its history of working collaboratively and respectfully with the farming community and would be a welcome addition to the GRCA's Board of Directors.

On behalf of the WFA and the rural agricultural community, thank you for considering this valuable step that acknowledges agriculture's role in water and soil conservation. Thank you for all of the work that you do and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Regards,

Nic Weber

Nic Weber
President Waterloo Federation of Agriculture.

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