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Re: Growth Management Amendment to County Official Plan – Proposed Expansion to the Codrington Rural Settlement Area for Residential Development

The Northumberland Federation of Agriculture represents (NFA) over 750 farm families and works in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) to be the voice of agriculture in Northumberland County. We are part of a vibrant and innovative industry, taking pride in feeding our communities and our country.

NFA would like to voice its opposition in response to the proposed amendment of the Northumberland Official Plan to designate agricultural land adjacent to the Hamlet of Codrington to be part of the rural settlement area to facilitate future development within the Hamlet as shown on Schedule X21.

The Provincial Policy Statement gives guidelines when municipalities consider expansion of a hamlet. We would like to draw your attention to **Section 1.1.3.8**

“A planning authority may identify a settlement area or allow the expansion of a settlement area boundary only at the time of a comprehensive review and only where it has been demonstrated that:

- c) in prime agricultural areas:*
 - 2. alternative locations have been evaluated, and*
 - i. there are no reasonable alternatives which avoid prime agricultural areas; and*
 - ii. there are no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas”*

Section 2.3.1 says,

“Prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long term use for agriculture. Prime agricultural areas are areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. Specialty crops shall be given the highest priority for protection, followed by Canada Land Inventory Class 1,2 and 3 lands, and any associated class 4 through 7 lands within the prime agricultural area, in this order of priority.”

In this case, NFA is in opposition to the amendment of the official plan to change productive agriculture land into housing development. This parcel, which the Canadian Land inventory indicates is class 1 agricultural land and the Ontario soils map shows this as a highly productive Wooler Silt loam with moderate slope and stone free, is a productive food producing property that we need to preserve for continued agriculture practices for now and in the future. At this time, there is no evidence that shows there is a shortage of alternative land in this municipality for development.

Furthermore, we are deeply concerned by the rapid loss of prime agricultural land in southern Ontario. According to Canadian Census data, Ontario is losing 319 acres per day of prime farmland. Only 5% of Ontario's land mass is arable and capable of producing the over 220 food products enjoyed by Ontarians and the world. The Ontario Agri-food sector contributes \$47 billion annually to the Provincial GDP and employs over 750,000 people, or 10% of the Ontario labour force. Further rapid development of prime agricultural land threatens these significant economic contributions to the province.

In conclusion, agriculture is a vital sector of the Northumberland economy and every acres matters.

Allan Carruthers
President of Northumberland Federation of Agriculture