

May 12, 2022

Re: Proposed Development Charges for Agriculture, Regional Municipality of Niagara

Dear Mayor and Council:

Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association represents over 200 nurseries that produce over \$270 million in farm gate sales. A significant portion of these farms are in the Niagara area. These growers represent the foundation of the broader Nursery/Landscape/Horticultural value chain that employs over 100,000 individuals and contributes 8.7 billion dollars to Ontario's economy.

We learned last week of proposed changes to the Region's development charges for agricultural buildings through a meeting of the Regional Development Charges Policy Task Force. The consultant proposed that the **Region amend Section 11 of the current By-law to remove agriculture from the exemptions list** as it does not align with the Region's incentive priority areas. Further, we learned that the proposed amendments include the **application of development charges in the 'commercial' category, at a rate of \$8.76-\$18.44 per square foot**. It is our understanding that the Task Force has approved the background study, including the proposed changes to agriculture's status.

This is alarming.

We are unaware of any consultation with agricultural sectors over the last year and have been advised that local municipalities within the Region were also uninformed with regards to this proposed change. The entire agriculture sector is a key driver within the Region, creating jobs, contributing to the GDP, and on a more personal level – contributing to the Region's community, green spaces and culture. The proposed development charges would effectively destroy the potential for future growth of the agriculture sector in the Region. Under Ontario's *More Homes for Everyone Act* (2022), there increased prioritization of home building, however, it is shocking to think that this priority will come at the expense of agriculture and its contribution to the Region.

Agricultural sectors are communicating our concerns to the Region's Council and Task Force and are requesting that the agricultural sector maintain its exemption in the proposed 2022 By-law. However, in this communication, we wanted to ensure your awareness of this issue and would appreciate your support through your municipality's representation at the Region.

Sincerely,



Tony DiGiovanni
Executive Director
Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association