

Queen's Park Office
Main Legislative Building, Unit 451
Toronto, ON M7A 1A8

416 325.4664
mschreiner@ola.org



Mike Schreiner, MPP
Guelph

Guelph Constituency Office
173 Woolwich Unit 102
Guelph, ON N1H 3V4

519.836.4190
mschreiner-co@ola.org

March 31, 2026

Dear Stratford Council members.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you in this letter and special thanks to Councillor Jo-Dee Burbach for her motion to support Bill 21, Protect Our Food Act.

Now more than ever - at a time when we are facing threats to our sovereignty and our economy - I believe we must work across party and jurisdictional lines to support our local economy, protect our ability to feed ourselves and ensure the viability of Ontario's food and farming sector.

Ontario farmers grow more than 200 different crops on 49,600 farms across the province and the province's agriculture sector contributes over \$52 billion to the provincial economy, employing over 875,000 people. One in nine jobs in Ontario are in the agrifood economy.

All of that is at risk because Ontario loses 319 acres of farmland every day - the equivalent of losing 9 family farms each week - to urban sprawl, major highway projects, aggregate mining and other developments.

In fact, in the past 35 years, Ontario has lost 2.8 million acres (18%) of its farmland to non-agricultural land uses.

This is especially concerning because only 5% of Ontario's land is suitable for growing food and raising livestock and only 0.5% of Ontario's land is prime farmland.

It is critically important to protect farmland because once you lose it, it is gone for generations. That's why MPP Brady and I teamed up to introduce Bill 21, the *Protect Our Food Act*, to create a Foodbelt to protect farmland.

If passed, the Bill will establish **The Foodbelt Protection Plan Advisory Committee**, comprised of farmers, agricultural experts, soil scientists, professional planners and food and agricultural organizations.

The committee would make recommendations for a Foodbelt Protection Plan that would ensure the preservation and enhancement of agricultural land.

The committee's work would result in a report addressing key priorities such as:

- Reducing farmland speculation
- Improving soil health
- And a plan to protect and enhance farmland

I want to emphasize that this would be a farmer led committee and a farmer-led process.

I have been so grateful to receive endorsements for Bill 21 from many farm organizations such as the Ontario Federation of Agricultural, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, the National Farmers Union and others.

I also want to thank people for the support we have received from every part of the province, from urban and rural folks and from people across the political spectrum.

I think this bill has received so much attention and support because people know that now is the time to protect our farmland, support farmers, and grow more food right here at home.

Food security is national security and without farmland, there are no farms, no food, no future.

I want to thank you again for your interest in this bill. Your support would make a real difference in building support for protecting Ontario's farmland.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Schreiner".

Mike Schreiner
MPP, Guelph