



January 9, 2023

Ernie Hardeman, MPP
Chair, Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Whitney Block, Room 1405
99 Wellesley Street W
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2
Email: scfea@ola.org

Dear Chair,

Subject: *Bill 46, Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act, 2022* and proposed changes to the *Animal Health Act*

Ontario Pork welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on *Bill 46, Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act, 2022* and specifically the proposed changes to the *Animal Health Act*.

Ontario Pork is the voice of the province's 1,064 pork farmers, and a leader in the agriculture industry. Led by producers, Ontario Pork is committed to sustainable growth in the pork sector, delivering government representation, research investment, and industry improvements in areas including animal care and environmental sustainability, while growing the brand and reputation of producers and their products. Ontario's pork sector represents a significant part of the Canadian economy, combining - from "farm to fork" - \$1.35 billion in GDP, 19,906 full time jobs and over \$3.78 billion in economic output.

We are committed to ensuring that Ontario's pork farmers continue to bring high quality pork to Ontarians and international consumers. We are grateful for the government's ongoing support of the pork industry and for its continued commitment to red tape reduction. We firmly believe that a strong and competitive pork industry requires continued government support and partnerships with the agri-food sector.

Animal Health Act

Ontario Pork is supportive of actions that continue to support and protect the pork sector and agri-food, and we would welcome changes to the *Animal Health Act* that allow for quick, measured, and thorough actions if a hazard is identified. By allowing for a temporary response order, effective for up to 72 hours, as well as the ability of the Chief Veterinarian for Ontario to recommend an additional 72-hour extension, the health of human, animals and the provincial food supply can be addressed and protected.

As the Standing Committee may be aware, the pork industry continues to face significant threats due to the potential incursion of foreign animal diseases, especially African swine fever (ASF), a disease that has decimated entire herds in some parts of the world. If ASF were to be found in Canada, it would lead to immediate border closures and any loss of markets would have a devastating impact on farm families and the economy. Massive losses of pigs, as well as farmers' income and livelihood would also severely impact mental health for farmers, their families, and their employees.

Continued cooperation with the provincial government to improve emergency preparedness is of great importance to Ontario's pork producers. We are very appreciative of government funding support thus far regarding foreign animal disease preparedness.

We also wish to raise the fact that to maintain orderly marketing in case of a foreign animal disease outbreak, and/or other crises, such as fires, which would negatively impact the sector, Ontario's pork producers require support across the value chain, including partial reimbursement of the value of lost animals. Ontario Pork strongly recommends that the compensation provisions outlined in Section 26, which we have previously supported, also apply if a temporary response order is issued.

Ontario Pork appreciates the opportunity to provide input on this consultation and we welcome any questions on our submission.

Sincerely,



John de Bruyn
Board Chair

cc: Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Michael Richardson, Senior Policy Advisor, OMAFRA Food Safety and Environmental Policy Branch