



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

ERNIE HARDEMAN, M.P.P.

Oxford

March 8, 2016

Hon. Charles Sousa
Minister of Finance
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Dear Minister Sousa,

I was disappointed to see that your recently released budget did not contain more support for our farmers and agricultural industry.

As you know for years our caucus was proud to work with commodity groups, agriculture organizations and farmers to push the government for a risk management insurance program that was bankable, predictable and permanent.

We support the Risk Management Program, but the implementation of the cap and resulting changes to the program mean that it is no longer predictable or bankable.

I was pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you about the need to fix this program at the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition lunch before the budget, where they asked for an increase of \$25 million per year over the next three years. This would have allowed the Risk Management program to once again act as a proper insurance program as intended. However, the budget ignored their request.

We have long supported steps to get this program back to being the one that we all fought for. We believe that the government funds allocated for this program should stay in the fund if they aren't spent so they are available for the bad years.

We believe that our farmers deserve a government that supports them and a Risk Management Program that they can count on. I ask you to work with the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition to once again make the Risk Management Program a bankable, predictable program.

Sincerely,

Ernie Hardeman, MPP
Oxford

