

Minister
of Agriculture and
Agri-Food
and Minister for the
Canadian Wheat Board



Ministre
de l'Agriculture et de
l'Agroalimentaire
et ministre de la
Commission canadienne du blé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0C5

SEP 25 2007

Quote: 106850

Mr. Paul Mennill, President
Mr. John Gillespie, Past-President
Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association
GMB 411, RR 1
Zurich, Ontario N0M 2T0

Dear Messrs. Mennill and Gillespie:

I am writing in response to your letter to the Right Honourable Stephen Harper regarding water quality, agriculture, and the environment in the areas of Ontario adjacent to Lake Huron. As you know, the Prime Minister's Office forwarded a copy of your letter for my consideration. I appreciate receiving the Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association's report you enclosed regarding water quality, and I am pleased to be made aware of the Board's views on this matter.

The Government of Canada understands the importance of the environment to Canadians. You will be pleased to note that we are working with our provincial partners to ensure that issues like the ones you identified are reflected in our policies and programs. For a number of years, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) has been working with the provinces to administer voluntary agri-environmental programming that provides financial support to farmers for stewardship activities.

Under the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), AAFC has committed to funding a range of beneficial management practices under the National Farm Stewardship Program. Appropriate to the needs and circumstances of individual farms or regions, beneficial management practices address issues such as nutrient management (manure and fertilizer), pest management (pesticides), land and water management, nuisance management (odours and emissions), and biodiversity management (agriculture and wildlife). Another APF program, Greencover Canada, offers support to producers to improve and protect water quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance biodiversity through new land conversion practices, tree planting, and managing agricultural land near water.

Please be assured that AAFC will continue to work closely with provincial governments and other federal departments on agri-environmental policy and program development. Discussions with provincial officials are well underway as we develop the next generation of agricultural policy. During this process, we expect to build on past successes while incorporating promising new ideas.

.../2

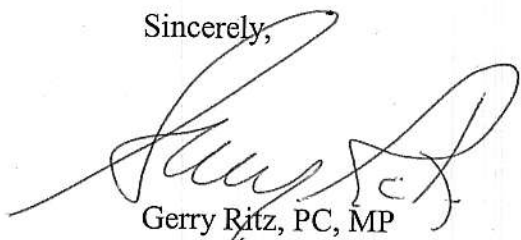
Canada

Messrs. Mennill and Gillespie

Page 2

I trust that this information is of assistance. Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gerry Ritz". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Gerry Ritz, PC, MP