



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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March 14, 2014

Hon. Kathleen Wynne,
Premier of Ontario and Minister of Agriculture and Food
Legislative Building, Room 281
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

RE: MORATORIUM ON CLOSURE OF KEMPTVILLE AND ALFRED AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

Dear Premier Wynne:

Kathleen

As you know, your decision to stand by and allow the University of Guelph to announce it was shuttering agricultural colleges in Kemptville and Alfred was a devastating blow to the agri-food industry, economic development initiatives and the broader rural community in Eastern Ontario.

More than a century of excellence in agriculture education, research and innovation will be ripped from our community if you allow the university's decision to stand.

People are outraged Wednesday's announcement was made without any consultation with the communities affected. This unilateral decision dismissed entirely the importance of these two schools to the future economic growth of our region.

That's why I'm writing to request you put a two-year moratorium on the closure of the Kemptville and Alfred campuses. Doing so will give Eastern Ontario what the University of Guelph's short-sighted and self-interested financial decision didn't – an opportunity to develop a locally based plan to save the two colleges.

As you know, there is a very recent precedent you can follow to put this moratorium in place. In 2012, your predecessor in the Agriculture portfolio, MPP Ted McMeekin, granted a two-year moratorium on closing the New Liskeard Agricultural Research Station.

It is my understanding the stakeholders who came together in New Liskeard when that closure was taken off the table are set to present a business case to your government later this year. I'm asking you to give the people of Eastern Ontario that same opportunity.

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Given the response I have seen over the past two days from my riding of Leeds-Grenville and across Eastern Ontario, I have no question we can bring together a team to collaborate on ideas to not only keep the doors at Alfred and Kemptville open, but position the campuses to expand.

All we need is for you to do your job as Minister of Agriculture and Food by standing up for farmers and agriculture by announcing an immediate moratorium on the closure to ensure a new class of students shows up in Kemptville and Alfred this September.

I look forward to your positive response and the opportunity to work with you and your government on a made-in-Eastern-Ontario proposal that recognizes how critical these two agricultural colleges are to the future economic prosperity of our region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Clark', with a stylized, flowing script.

Steve Clark, MPP,
Leeds-Grenville