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*For immediate release*

## **Waterloo and Ontario Federations of Agriculture call for pause on assembly of prime farmland in Wilmot Township by Region of Waterloo**

**GUELPH ON [March 28, 2024]** – The Waterloo Federation of Agriculture (WFA) and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) have been working closely with area farmers to gather information about the rapidly evolving land use situation unfolding in Wilmot Township.

Farmers and landowners including vegetable, grain and dairy farmers have received offers from a US-based consulting firm, acting on behalf of the Region of Waterloo to purchase 770 acres of prime agricultural land. The stated objective is to rezone this land for industrial use and embark on a significant economic investment and development project.

Nic Weber, President of the Waterloo Federation of Agriculture expresses deep disappointment in the process. “Area farmers and urban counterparts in Waterloo have enjoyed a 30-year history of positive working relationships and communications, working to achieve a balance of both protecting farmland and ensuring a thriving, vibrant urban community,” says Weber. “There has not been adequate consultation with local communities or consultation with landowners. We need to take the appropriate steps to ensure a thoughtful, long-term planning approach is taken to ensure a healthy productive farming sector for generations to come,” explains Weber.

OFA continues to encourage and recommend utilizing well established best planning practices that promotes a harmonious use of our landscape for both the interests of today and tomorrow.

“We understand the urgency of the situation in Wilmot Township and remain concerned about the accelerating loss of farmland in Ontario. We are committed to achieving our goal of *Farms and Food Forever*, ensuring prime agricultural land in the area is maintained and protected, while supporting growth opportunities and economic development in areas that are best suited,” says Drew Spoelstra, OFA President. “OFA strongly supports rural economic development where it does not undermine our precious and finite agricultural resources.”

The WFA has been working closely with the group of landowners directly affected by the proposed rezoning and development project, sharing information and support, and has been reaching out to all possible channels of support including all three levels of government. They encourage members of the community with concerns to reach out

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and share them with municipal councillors, Mayors, regional councillors, and the regional Chair as well as their provincial representative at Queen's Park (Member of Provincial Parliament).

The WFA and OFA continue to seek the opportunity to engage in discussions with government to identify alternative locations for this development and rezoning to occur, where loss of productive farmland can be minimized.

The [Ontario Federation of Agriculture \(OFA\)](#) represents 38,000 farm families across the province and serves as the leading advocate and strongest voice of Ontario's farmers. As a dynamic farmer-led organization, the OFA represents and champions the interests of Ontario farmers through government relations, farm policy recommendations, research, lobby efforts, community representation, media relations and more.

The [Waterloo Federation of Agriculture \(WFA\)](#) is one of 51 county and regional federations supported by OFA across the province. Waterloo Federation of Agriculture represents the voice of agriculture in the local community and advocates on behalf of farm families in the Region of Waterloo on local agricultural issues. The goal of WFA is to promote the farm community in support of the innovation, hard work and compassion that is emblematic of the Region.

**For more information:**

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