

Ministry of Agriculture,  
Food and Rural Affairs

Ministère de l'Agriculture, de  
l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Office of the Parliamentary Assistant

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Dear Messrs. and Madam:

I want to thank you and your delegation for taking the time to meet with me during the 2024 ROMA Conference. Our government is committed to supporting our rural communities and I greatly value these opportunities to speak with you directly. Your input is important to me as we continue to work together.

Thank you for raising your concerns regarding Spotted Lanternfly, Oak Wilt and Spongy (Gypsy) Moth. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) is working with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (responsible for establishing and maintaining standards to prevent the introduction and spread of plant pests in Canada) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), to address Spotted Lanternfly and Oak Wilt. As Spongy Moth is a forest pest in Ontario, I would encourage you to share your concerns with my colleague, the Honourable Graydon Smith, at [minister.mnrf@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mnrf@ontario.ca). I will follow up with him as well.

As part of OMAFRA's work to mitigate potential impacts of Spotted Lanternfly, we are investing more than \$50,000 in funding to monitor the pest at high-traffic locations, including introducing methods such as sticky tree bands. In addition, we implemented a team of specialists who formed part of a working group which successfully registered six pesticides in response to Spotted Lanternfly.

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To help identify and prevent Oak Wilt, the ministry is working with both MNRF and the sector to raise awareness of the disease. OMAFRA specialists are also providing education to nursery growers and commercial arborists about pest and production management as well as ways to recognize and avert Oak Wilt.

If your municipality or residents suspect pests such as Oak Wilt or Spotted Lanternfly in your area, they should report that to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency through these links:

- [Spotted lanternfly Spot it? Snap it, catch it and report it - Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(canada.ca\)](#)
- [Oak wilt - Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(canada.ca\)](#)

I would also like to note that this past year our government opened the Biosecurity Enhancement Initiative, which provides funding to eligible agri-food businesses and contributors so they can protect animal and plant health. Examples of eligible projects include establishing or improving cleaning practices and training to support the mitigation of biosecurity risks in food production. I encourage you to share news of this initiative with applicable local businesses who would benefit from it.

As mentioned in Minister Thompson's remarks at ROMA, our government is launching consultations to develop a Rural Economic Development Strategy. We understand that a strong and dynamic rural Ontario is essential for the province's economy, and by working together, we can achieve great things for rural communities and small towns. If you have not done so already, I encourage you to submit your thoughts to our on-line portal by visiting this link: [Consultation: Rural Economic Development Strategy | ontario.ca](#).

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Jones', with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

Trevor Jones  
Parliamentary Assistant

c: The Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry