

THE HONOURABLE ROBERT BLACK
SENATOR – ONTARIO



L'HONORABLE ROBERT BLACK
SÉNATEUR – ONTARIO

SENATE | SÉNAT
CANADA

June 13, 2025

Mayor Heather Watson
Township of Douro-Dummer
894 South St.
P.O. Box 92
Warsaw Ontario K0L 3A0

Dear Mayor Watson,

I am writing you to raise an important issue impacting provinces, territories and municipalities across Canada that requires your immediate attention and action.

In June 2024, the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry (AGFO) tabled a report on soil health in Canada that was completed over an 18-month period. This report examined the state of soil health across Canada, the effects of soil pollution and contamination, as well as domestic and international practices in place to protect, preserve and conserve soil.

Our report found that soil is at risk. Canada, along with other countries around the world, are losing substantial amounts of healthy, useable soil that is needed to grow food to feed our nation. In addition, there are over 20 million contaminated sites around the world, and more than 30 per cent of the world's soil is already degraded, meaning it has significantly lost its ability to grow food, hold water or support plants and animals. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-UN) estimates that 90 per cent of the world's soil will be degraded by 2050, if something is not done.

Climate change is causing extreme weather events and unpredictable weather that causes soil degradation. Farmers may not have the financial means or resources to use sustainable methods to preserve their soil and agricultural lands full of rich soil are being paved over to build infrastructure and housing. While the agriculture sector faces these issues, there is little being done to ensure that soil is being protected.

If Canada continues down this path and does not prioritize the protection of farmlands and the conservation of soil health, we will find ourselves lacking the agricultural land we need to sustain our ever-growing country. We will lose the ability to not only feed Canadians but the world!

The preservation of Canadian soil requires a whole of government approach. While many recommendations in the report specifically call on action by federal and provincial governments, municipal governments are equally as equipped to assist in this endeavor. With your support, we can work to keep this issue front of mind for all government officials, so that soil protection and conservation is taken seriously and met with meaningful action.

In April 2025, I had the pleasure of presenting our soil report and recommendations to the Township of Amaranth Council in Dufferin County. The response I received from this visit was tremendous, with the Council putting forward a resolution that supports all the recommendations outlined in the AGFO soil report. This initiative pushes us forward in the fight to save our soil and reiterates to all levels of government the urgency of this issue.

Subsequently, the Township of North Wellington Council passed a similar motion of support.

Enclosed, you will find a QR Code to access the AGFO soil report, and copies of the Township of Amaranth and Township of Wellington North resolutions. I implore you to read the report, the 25 recommendations on how to best protect, preserve and conserve our soils, the federal government's response, as well as the municipal resolutions put forward this spring. And hopefully you will consider supporting the resolution and pass a similar one at a future council meeting.

I am committed to continue advocating for soil health in the Red Chamber, and I hope that the agriculture sector has your support in this endeavor. It is important that we work together to ensure we will have the land we need to continue feeding our country now and for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Black', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Hon. Robert Black, P. Ag. (Hon)
Senator (Ontario)

c.c.: All Municipal Councils across Ontario

Attachments (3)



374028 6TH LINE • AMARANTH ON • L9W 0M6

April 16, 2025

The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4

**Re: Critical Ground: Why Soil is Essential to Canada's Economic,
Environmental, Human and Social Health**

Following a presentation and discussion from The Honourable Robert Black at the regular meeting of Council held on April 16, 2025, the Township of Amaranth Council passed the following motion:

Resolution #: 3

Moved by: G. Little **Seconded by:** A. Stirk

Whereas the Township of Amaranth 2023 Strategic Plan included a vision statement "To grow a strong, vibrant rural and agricultural community" and a goal to "Protect our agricultural land and promote the farming economy"

And Whereas the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry published a report in 2024 titled "Critical Ground: Why Soil is Essential to Canada's Economic, Environmental, Human and Social Health" that contained twenty five (25) recommendations in total for the federal government, two of which also provided recommended actions for provincial and territorial governments.

And Whereas, Recommendation 7 of Critical Ground stated that "The Government of Canada encourage provinces, territories, and municipalities to develop measures—as a form of land use planning—that best preserve and protect agricultural land in their jurisdictions."

Therefore be it resolved that the Township of Amaranth fully support all of the Recommendations included within Critical Ground and will consider how to implement the Recommendations contained within Critical Ground when completing a review of the Township of Amaranth Official Plan.

And further that the Township of Amaranth urge the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario to implement all the recommendations contained within Critical Ground and commit to recognizing a sense of urgency and act accordingly in order to protect and conserve soil as per Recommendation 25.

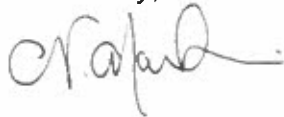
And further that this motion be circulated to the following parties:

- *All local municipalities within the County of Dufferin*
- *MPP Hon. Sylvia Jones*
- *Hon. Todd McCarthy, Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks*
- *Hon. Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness*
- *Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs*
- *MP Hon. Kyle Seebach*
- *Federal Ministry of Environment and Climate Change*
- *Federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Rural Economic Development*
- *Rural Ontario Municipal Association*
- *Association of Municipalities of Ontario*
- *Federation of Canadian Municipalities*
- *Dufferin Federation of Agriculture*
- *Ontario Federation of Agriculture*
- *Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry*
- *Premier of Ontario*
- *Prime Minister of Canada*

CARRIED

Please do not hesitate to contact the office if you require any further information on this matter.

Yours truly,



Nicole Martin, Dipl. M.A.
CAO/Clerk



Township of Wellington North Council meeting of June 2, 2025

RESOLUTION

Whereas the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry published a report in 2024 titled "Critical Ground: Why Soil is Essential to Canada's Economic, Environmental, Human and Social Health" (the Report) that contained twenty five (25) recommendations in total for the federal government;

And whereas the work that Senator Black has done to bring not only the importance of soil to the forefront for the federal government, but Canadian agriculture - in specific Ontario agriculture, food security and how much the Ontario agricultural industry contributes to the federal and provincial Gross Domestic Product, is of critical significance to Wellington North - indeed all of Wellington County.

Therefore be it resolved that the Township of Wellington North fully supports all of the recommendations included in the Report;

And that the Township of Wellington North urge the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario to implement all the recommendations contained within the Report and commit to recognizing a sense of urgency and act accordingly in order to protect and conserve soil as per Recommendation 25;

And further that this motion be circulated to the following parties:

- Rob Black, Senator
- John Nater, MP Perth Wellington
- Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry
- All municipalities within the County of Wellington
- Wellington Federation of Agriculture
- Ontario Federation of Agriculture

