



For immediate release

New partnership announced to secure natural gas access in rural Ontario

Guelph, ON [October 4, 2016] – Rural Ontario needs infrastructure equivalent to urban centres. That's the goal of a new partnership announced today at Queen's Park between the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus and the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus.

"Natural gas access across the province could save Ontario farmers, business owners and rural residents more than \$1 billion annually in energy costs," says OFA President, Don McCabe. "This represents new, disposable income in the hands of our residents, families and rural businesses, to spend and stimulate our local economies."

The new partners will work with the provincial government and gas companies to immediately develop a fair and equitable way to install new natural gas pipeline across rural Ontario each year for the next 20 years. The proposed program will require public investment in the pipeline infrastructure and a viable rural rate for gas set by the Ontario Energy Board.

"It was encouraging to hear, in the recent Throne speech, that the Province is demonstrating some willingness to address the number-one concern of our rural residents and our rural industries – the soaring cost of hydroelectricity – but more can be done to lessen that burden, and natural gas is one of those solutions," explains Warden Peter Emon, Chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus.

Today's announcement brings together three organizations that represent rural Ontario and advocates for the ratepayers, farms and businesses of rural Ontario. Working together, the group is strengthening their call for a commitment to natural gas across Ontario.

"Provincial funding is vital to provide the necessary energy cost relief rural Ontario so desperately needs," says Mayor Randy Hope, Chair of the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus. "Natural gas is the answer to reducing energy costs, developing our businesses and growing our rural communities."

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For more information:

Don McCabe
President
Ontario Federation of Agriculture
519-331-6175

Peter Emon
Chair
Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus
613-401-7186

Randy Hope
Chair
Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus
519-360-1998