



June 1, 2016

The Honourable Bob Chiarelli  
Minister of Energy  
4th Floor, Hearst Block  
900 Bay St.  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2E1

Dear Minister,

The Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) represents 19,000 beef producers in Ontario by advocating in the areas of policy planning, industry development and research, and domestic and export market development. I am pleased to write to you in regards to Bill 161, the *Ground Current Pollution Act*, as proposed by MPP Rick Nicholls.

Uncontrolled electricity, or stray current, is a serious concern that can have negative effects on animal health. Research has shown that exposure to higher levels of stray current affects the behaviour and performance of livestock animals, which can have detrimental effects on the economic viability of farm operations. Despite a number of corrective measures proposed to reduce or eliminate stray current from livestock facilities, many operations continue to struggle with this problem and its effects.

BFO is encouraged by the development of Bill 161 as recognition of the ongoing problems many livestock farmers across Ontario are experiencing as a result of stray current. As such, we view Bill 161 as a preliminary, positive step in the right direction. Whether through legislation, regulation or collaboration, practical measures must be implemented to address the problem of stray current, including timelines and processes to resolve issues. To reach agreement on meaningful timelines, we need to better understand the most appropriate methods for mitigating existing occurrences, and address stray current issues through medium- and long-term distribution system planning.

As a member of the Uncontrolled Electricity Working Group, which includes farmers and representatives from the beef, dairy, pork and poultry commodities, as well as the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Farm and Food Care, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, Hydro One, regional distribution companies and electric engineers, BFO has been engaged in positioning the issue of stray current as vital for the government, regulators and utilities to resolve. This group has made progress working with the Electrical Safety Authority, the Independent Electricity System Operator, the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to mitigate and resolve stray current problems on farms, though it continues to be an issue for many livestock operations in Ontario.

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BFO supports the intent of the *Ground Current Pollution Act*, and we strongly encourage the Ontario government to take timely action to address this issue that includes consultation with the agricultural community, electrical industry and subject matter experts. As part of the Uncontrolled Electricity Working Group, BFO will continue to advocate for a consistent approach to testing, documenting and resolving stray current issues on farms.

BFO looks forward to any future opportunities to provide comments and insight on the issue of stray current on livestock farms and the potential legislative or regulatory action that can be taken to address this problem. We would be pleased to meet with you or representatives from your Ministry to discuss this issue in further detail at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Matt Bowman  
President

cc: The Honourable Jeff Leal, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
MPP Rick Nicholls  
BFO Board of Directors

