



21 April 2015

The Honourable Michael Coteau,
Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Hearst Block
9th Floor
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2E1
Via email : mcoteau.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

Re: Severance of Land from the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) for the Civic Hospital Campus

Dear Minister Coteau,

As you are no doubt aware, the Government of Canada recently offered a 60-acre parcel of the Central Experimental Farm National Historic Site of Canada (NHS) to the Ottawa Hospital for the purposes of constructing a new site for the Civic Campus. This letter does not dispute the need for new facilities. Rather, I am questioning the proposed location and its significant impact on a nationally significant historic site.

I am wondering if you are fully aware of the ramifications of what is proposed. As Minister responsible for culture, I am hoping you will exert your influence.

As a national historic site, the CEF is a place that has been identified for its importance to all Canadians. In a very real sense, it belongs to all Canadians, coast to coast to coast, and is part of this generation's legacy to our children. It was designated as a significant scientific cultural landscape, and as a centre for scientific advances which has benefited Canada, and continues to benefit Canada. Clearly if it is chopped up, it will lose those qualities that made it an historic site.

Part of this historic and modern significance rests with the role of the CEF is a nationally significant research centre, founded in 1886 by Sir John A Macdonald, to support agricultural science in a new country. To this day, the CEF is an open-air laboratory focussed on long-term experiments in agriculture. One cannot overstate the importance of agriculture to Canada's economy, and to the well-being of each and every one of us in terms of our long term health and future welfare. Others can speak more authoritatively on the scientific significance of the CEF, but Agriculture Canada's own website characterises the farm as: [the Central Experimental Farm] "leads Eastern Canada ... in crop development, targeting corn, soy, spring wheat, winter wheat, oats and barley. The Centre has been at the forefront of pioneering gene isolation, gene transfer, and studying gene expression in crop plants for the last 25 years... " We have been told that 60 acres is only 6% of the total area of the Farm. But it is closer to 15 to 20 % of the total usable crop research area. That's a significant impact.

What is the role of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation in this situation? Will you have a voice in the proposal to dismember a national historic site?

Let's look for a win-win scenario, in which the Civic Hospital gets the new facilities it needs and deserves, and the Central Experimental Farm continues to play its role as a nationally significant research institution and national historic site that benefits us all. While the federal government's offer is generous, seen within the perspective of the federal government's land holdings in the national capital region, it is the biggest single land owner, and many of these sizeable properties are unused or underused (the CEF is not one of those).

We have been assured that the CEF is not for sale and the land is only being leased, but this is a rather specious assertion, for once removed from farmland it can never be recovered for its original purpose nor its original heritage designation respected.

Sir, I appeal to you as a champion of heritage conservation in Ontario to reconsider the Province's role in this proposal, and to return to your federal partners and look at options that work for all. Please do not be a party to this destruction.

I am looking forward to your response,

Yours sincerely,

Leslie Maitland, M. Mus., CAHP
President, Heritage Ottawa

Copied to:

The Hon. Jeff Leal, Minister, Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (jleal.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org)

The Hon. Eric Hoskins, Minister, Health and Long Term Care (ehoskins.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org)

The Hon. Pierre Poilievre, P.C., M.P., Minister Responsible for the National Capital Commission (info@pco-bcp.gc.ca attn: Minister Poilievre)

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Dr. Mark Kristmanson, CEO, National Capital Commission
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