

To:



From:

Re: Emerald Ash Borer Quarantine

Date:

It has come to my attention as a woodlot owner in Norfolk County that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is proposing to amalgamate the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) quarantine areas in southwestern Ontario.

As a woodlot owner in Norfolk County I cannot support this proposal.

The Norfolk Woodlot Owners Association (NWOA), in partnership with Norfolk County, has gone to great lengths to fund and support a program to assist myself and other woodlot owners to implement a community based program to address emerging forest health threats, including Emerald Ash Borer.

It is of great concern that no public consultation was undertaken by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency with the woodlot owners of Norfolk County. Since 2002, immediately following the first find of EAB, the Norfolk Woodlot Owners Association provided your staff access to our 300+ members to educate them on preparing for the possibility of EAB. We started the process, meeting with our counterparts in the USA, discussing options with industry, and searching out rural economic funding sources to help myself and other woodlot owners, if someday, EAB was found.

Within 1 month of the EAB regulation being put in place for Norfolk County, 384,000 trees from ash saplings to mature trees, within a 500 meter radius of the EAB find, were removed in partnership with the NWOA, Norfolk County Roads, Parks and Forestry Divisions, Hydro One and the Conservation Authority. The wood was salvaged and we in turn educated our partners on what to look for.

Now, a year after it arrived, and with no new confirmed EAB finds in Norfolk, no chance is being provided by CFIA to allow the community to continue their efforts to slow the spread.

This proposal is unacceptable. Looking at the larger picture, the CFIA must recognize that this will expedite the spread of EAB throughout Norfolk County and our neighbouring jurisdictions. Within the proposed amalgamated quarantine, Norfolk is home to three of the largest hardwood sawmills, two of which neighbour two uninfected jurisdictions.

As a rural municipality we cannot afford the associated loss of opportunity if EAB is left unabated, and further we will not be able to absorb the costs associated with rampant spread of EAB into our rural roadways, urban parks, cemeteries or along our trail systems.

My woodlot provides to society clean air, abundant access to clean water, species diversity second to none anywhere else in Canada, infinite environmental benefits and a diversity of economic opportunities; however this proposal puts such at risk.

I would ask that the CFIA immediately begin discussions with the Norfolk Woodlot Owners Association and Norfolk County to review our unique opportunity to take advantage of a community dedicated to conservation.

Norfolk County is the Forest Capital of Canada two years running because of our dedication to conserving our resources; *do not take that away from us.*

I would request a written response at the earliest possible opportunity so I can be assured the federal government has not lost focus on the strength of a community to conserve our nation's most precious natural resource.

Sincerely,

