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Hon. Premier Doug Ford
Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Queen's Park

April 9, 2020

Dear Premier Ford,

I am writing to urge the government to reconsider the decision to label community gardens as a recreational activity subject to recent emergency orders made under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While I am fully supportive of physical distancing and the restriction of all non-essential activities, businesses and services, growing food in a community garden is not a recreational activity. It is an essential service and should be included in the agricultural exemption.

Food insecurity, especially for the most vulnerable, is always a serious issue. Many individuals and families use community gardens to help feed themselves. Community gardens also supply fresh produce to support food banks and food security organizations. These are essential activities that should be able to continue with new measures to keep everyone safe.

As you might know, the Ontario Community Growing Network (OCGN) is working with public health departments to develop COVID-19 safety protocols for community gardens, and other provinces have allowed community gardens to remain open with physical distancing guidelines.

I urge you to remedy the situation so community gardens can remain open for all who depend on them.

I appreciate your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Schreiner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Mike Schreiner

MPP, Guelph

Cc:

Hon. Syliva Jones, Solicitor General of Ontario

Hon. Min. Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs