

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry  
Suite 6630, 6th Floor, Whitney Block  
99 Wellesley Street West, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1W3  
**Attention: Hon Kathryn McGarry, MPP, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry**

Dear Minister McGarry:

I urge your ministry to reverse its decision to close the Ontario Tree Seed Plant in Angus, Ontario.

Tree seeds are critical to the health and longevity of Ontario's forests. For our natural and human-made environments to prosper despite the increasingly chaotic effects of climate change, it's important to have a facility that maintains and generates high quality seed of known origin. I am concerned that your decision will adversely affect Ontario's ability to mitigate environmental disasters in the coming years. At the very least, this decision should not be made without stakeholder consultation.

The OTSP in Angus, Ontario specializes in the processing and storage of billions of tree seeds. It supplies seeds for public and private forests across Ontario, but is **managed by only six expert staff and costs less than two million dollars annually**. I am dismayed by MNRF's decision to terminate such an important and cost-effective facility without investigating alternative sources of funding or consulting with clients, stakeholders and the community.

The history of seed programs in Ontario demonstrates the enduring requirement for a facility like the OTSP. Before the 1990s, MNRF Seed Program staff managed seed for government programs that annually planted over 100 million trees on Crown Land in Northern Ontario, and as many as 20 million trees on private land in Southern Ontario. Those trees became the forests surrounding us today. In the mid-1990's, the MNRF reforestation program was dismantled as a result of cost-cutting measures. Tree nurseries were closed and sold, and plans were made to privatize the Seed Plant. The Forest Gene Conservation Association, community stakeholders and private nurseries advocated for the seed plant to remain public and in 1999, MNRF reconsidered its decision and created the OTSP facility. The decision resulted in significant gains to Ontario's native tree population. For example, the OTSP provided seed for the 50 Million Tree Program in 2007; without the OTSP, that program would not have been possible.

If you close OTSP, where will the millions of stored seeds currently housed at their facility be sent? Will you lose the expertise of six highly qualified and knowledgeable people? Where will seed crops from next year be processed? Who will monitor the quality of seeds entering Ontario, and who will track seed sources to ensure that potentially dangerous invasive seeds aren't used in new growth forests?

Ontario's forests are susceptible to threats associated with climate change, invasive insects, plants and diseases, and increased deforestation due to development. They cannot survive and thrive for future generations without the help of venerable organizations like OTSP.

Please take these thoughts into consideration and reverse your decision to close OTSP. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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