Please see message below.

I ask that each of you reach out to your many contacts with a view to restoring "core" funding to Erie Innovation & Commercialization which has done so much and can do so much more to assist in the growth and diversification of the economy of rural S.W Ontario.

Dennis Travale
Mayor, Norfolk County
(519) 426 - 5870 ext 1220
Twitter @dennistravale

Ms. Deb Stark
Member & Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture & Food & Ministry of Rural Affairs - EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
11th Floor, 77 Grenville St, Toronto ON M7A1B3

Ms. Rena Hubers
Chief Administrative Officer/Assistant Deputy Minister - RESEARCH AND CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION
Ontario Government Bldg, 2nd Flr NW, 1 Stone Rd W, Guelph ON N1G4Y2

Mr. Michael Toombs
Director - RESEARCH AND INNOVATION BRANCH
Ontario Government Bldg, 2nd Flr NW, 1 Stone Rd West, Guelph ON N1G4Y2

Mr. Richard Séguin
Regional Director
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Ontario Regional Office, 174 Stone Road West, Guelph, Ontario N1G 4S9

Ms. Tina Namiesniowski
Assistant Deputy Minister
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Market and Industry Services Branch
1305 Baseline Road Tower 5, Floor 6, Room 322, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C5

Ms. Suzanne Vinet
Deputy Minister
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Deputy Minister’s Office
1341 Baseline Road Tower 7, Floor 9, Room 147, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C5

I am writing in my capacity as the President of Ontario’s South Coast Wineries and Growers Association located in Simcoe, Ontario as well as one of the owners and President of Burning Kiln Winery Inc. and as professional and life-long resident of this area. This involves the ceasing of operations of Erie Innovation & Commercialization and the most recent closing of their offices at the Simcoe Research Station. I am encouraging a solution to re-open and maintain the sustained and effective presence that Erie Innovations & Commercialization has come to provide.

Of course as most will know, this immediate area was at one time defined largely by tobacco growing. With its’ decline along with the decrease of secondary processing and manufacturing, I witnessed the struggles and difficulties first-hand in this immediate area. I also know the importance of innovation in the agri-food area in particular. Fortunately, we have been able to maintain the presence of the Simcoe Research Station and had the benefit of initial transition funding administered through the Community Transition Program. In addition, we started to experience the early benefits of the efforts of Erie Innovation and Commercialization’s involvement and extent of influence that this effort has made with lean resources over a relatively short period of time with credit largely going to Dr. John Kelly who has been the Vice President along with his excellent staff.

Obviously, of great concern and the reason for this message is the announcement and recent closing of Erie Innovation and Commercialization’s operations and office at the Simcoe Research Station and us looking for a solution to maintain and continue the unique innovation efforts and initiatives that have started or are being considered in this area.

We understand that the key issue is core funding for organizations like Erie Innovation & Commercialization especially given the stage of the developments in relation to agriculture and related business and commercialization in this particular region. We also understand that in these early stages, such organizations cannot effectively be operated on project administration dollars and expected to have a large, multifaceted long-term impact. Those organizations that were part of previous agricultural policy frameworks (Vineland Research Innovation Center, Bioenterprise, Soy 20/20, OAFT) were all funded. However, no new entities have been funded with possibly with the
exception of LRIC which had funding before Growing Forward 2. The current suite of GF2 programs provincially does not allow for core funding and this has created a gap particularly where new initiatives are involved. This was the area essentially where the efforts of Erie Innovation was involved. For rural areas and stable future rural development, diversification is a key strategy to managing risk and profitability.

There were no other organizations like Erie Innovations that organized, on a sector basis, new innovations. OAFT, Bioenterprise, Soy 20/20, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, and Sustainable Chemistry Alliance - the other agricultural innovation based organizations do not do this. Unique to the needs of this immediate region, Erie Innovation’s objectives were:

1. To pursue a regional approach to agricultural diversification to ensure the continuing economic stability and sustainability of the agricultural and economic sector.
2. To harness the regions potential and become a rural economic powerhouse in Ontario and Canada.
3. To establish Erie Innovation and Commercialization as a strategic partner for continued development of an integrated and globally competitive economic region.

Amongst the initiatives of Erie Innovation was involved with included:

- Developing new markets:
  - Hazelnuts
  - Biomass
- Launching new organizations:
  - Ontario South Coast Wineries and Growers Association (of which I am personally familiar)
  - Ontario Lavender Association
- Individual Quick Freeze (IQF) facility in Delhi, Ontario
- Market Place Analysis
- Repurposing of AAFC Delhi Research Station and completed studies of innovation, competitiveness, market development, collaboration, etc.

Erie Innovation and Commercialization had also published many valuable reports and efforts including:

- Accessing the Broader Public Sector Marketplace: Local Food Hub Business Plan & Implementation Strategy
- Erie Innovation and Commercialization and Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) Biomass Business Case Report
- Accessing the Marketplace: Development of an Optimal Food Distribution Model for the South Central Ontario Region
- Development of a Regional Strategy for Erie Innovation and Commercialization and the South Central Ontario Region
- IQF Facility in the South Central Ontario Region: Business Opportunity Analysis
- Commercializing Innovation: Push or Pull?
- The Grower, 15 articles on Erie Innovation and Commercialization related activities, total Circulation – 166,500
- Biotechnology Focus, 3 articles, total Circulation – 32,000
- Erie Innovation and Commercialization Newsletter “Come Innovate”, 5 issues, total Circulation – @10,000
- over 110 presentations by Erie Innovation and Commercialization, 60 in SCOR Region; 30 in Norfolk County, etc.
Future opportunities that Erie Innovation could have been central in developing include:

- Development of an invest-ability profile for opportunities
- Evaluation of Contract Manufacturing or Partnered Extraction Facility
- Develop Hazelnut aggregation capacity
- Establish 5 company opportunities per year that involve identifying keys to success for processors and growers; processing Initiatives – support for food and other forms of agricultural processing; develop a culture of entrepreneurs and commercialization and assist in project management and investment portfolio development, creation of a “living” database of investible opportunities in small urban and rural communities.
- Agricultural partnering with five other established Regional Innovation Centers (RICs) and working with them to focus on agriculture across the province.
- Entrepreneurial training and focused training sessions along the value chain.

Since this effort is so important to this area becoming diversified in the agricultural sector and subsequent value-added production for overall long-term sustainability in this rural context, it is critical for the area to have an effective agency and leadership as we adjust from the former dominance and decline of traditional agricultural activities and encourage new opportunities which our young farming and businesses are looking to. We do see how the gap has arisen. We know that a careful examination and consideration can lead to a creative solution to continue the current valuable efforts and future initiatives important to our rural communities and economic development. A fine nearby example of sustained sector development in Waterloo with Communitech has proven that creating tech clusters and innovation can be successful especially with younger individuals with long term commitments, funding and planning. We also possess capable and enterprising people in this area whose commitment was on display this summer with attracting and hosting the Grammy Award winning Mumford & Sons tour. Collectively, we are all committed to building upon these successes responsibly.

I would be glad to do what is possible or if required host a meeting/conference. However, in an area where I have seen the decline and the promise and potential of initiatives that are innovative and can be successful, the efforts and leadership of Erie Innovation & Commercialization should not be lost at such a critical time especially when it has been so effective and efficient.

I thank you for your attention and consideration to this and I would be glad should I be able to assist in any way. Best regards,

Mike McArthur
30 Virginia Avenue
Simcoe, Ontario N3Y 5M4
www.clinebackus.com
Cell 1-519-427-9393
authorized representative of The Corporation of Norfolk County.
Dear Mr. McKinlay:

I would like to personally thank you for participating in the formal review of Ontario’s Long-Term Energy Plan (LTEP). We received over 1,000 formal submissions, met with hundreds of stakeholders and interested members of the public through our consultations, and engaged with Aboriginal communities and leaders in every region of the province.

We will review all submissions as we finalize the LTEP. Your input will be considered as we make decisions on Ontario’s energy future.

Our plan will include an updated supply mix to reflect system changes in the three years since our last LTEP. Our system must remain highly reliable, make every effort to keep costs down, and ensure low emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

Ontario has been upgrading its transmission system to meet future growth and enable progress toward our supply mix goals. The review of the LTEP presents the opportunity to reassess those transmission priorities, while we review our energy goals and the means to achieve them. Your input, as well as that of others, will help us evaluate whether additional transmission is required.

The province has become a global leader in smart grid, with major investments and initiatives by the government, private sector and academia over the past several years. These investments have opened opportunities in economic development and increased connectivity across networks. Discussions through the LTEP review process have been positive and forward thinking, confirming the value in pursuing innovative solutions for our electricity infrastructure.

OCT 2 1 2013

Mr. Duncan McKinlay
Warden
Grey County
595 9th Avenue East
Owen Sound ON N4K 3E3

.../cont’d
Many jurisdictions around the world are exploring energy storage technologies and adapting their regulatory systems to accommodate them. There may be opportunities for Ontario to take advantage of integrating energy storage to increase system flexibility and ease the integration of distributed resources.

Aboriginal participation in the energy sector has been a key element of Ontario's energy plan. A number of provincial initiatives and programs have supported First Nation and Métis communities in developing projects and partnerships that provide opportunities for economic development and empower them to take control of their energy needs and interests. As we move forward, we will carefully consider the input we've received from First Nation and Métis communities so that we can continue to support and encourage Aboriginal participation in all aspects of the energy sector.

We will be updating our planning and consultation practices as well. Improving our regional planning process will help ensure that we plan for growth and long-term reliability that meets the diverse needs of our different regions.

As we carefully consider the questions facing the energy sector and make decisions in the areas mentioned above we will be guided by the principle of maintaining a clean, affordable and reliable electricity system for Ontario homes and businesses.

Thank you again for participating in this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Bob Chiarelli
Minister
I exchanged email with Mr. Feeney in Montreal who is representing CN Rail. The background is as follows:

- CN Rail sold the line between St Thomas and Delhi in 1998 to Trillium Rail who operate that section of track as St. Thomas and Eastern

- St Thomas and Eastern informed CN of their intentions to cease operations as of December 20, 2013 due to safety and economic issues; 3 bridges require significant repairs and the cost of the repair work is not warranted by the revenue generated by the rail traffic

- there are 7 main customers who moved 1100 cars last year with the majority being from Tillsonburg, Elgin, Norfolk

- under conditions of the original sale, the track reverts to CN Rail after Dec. 20 but CN does not plan to operate the track because of economics of operation and capital required for improvements

- under federal regulations CN is required to offer the track for sale with a response deadline of June 20 (6 months after they assume control) to governments then private sector

- The contact at Trillium is Karen Ettinger (phone: 905-835-2772). Trillium has the detailed information about the track and bridge conditions. CN can’t share it as it’s not theirs to share.

Mr. Feeney has spoken with the 3 MPP’s (Barrett, Hardeman, Yurek), Aylmer Mayor Couckuyt, MP Joe Preston and left a message with me. I have communicated further with Minister Finley and MPP Barrett.

CN staff are working with current customers using the track to find options in moving their freight. There is no passenger traffic on that section of track.

Given the recent request by SWEA and affected Counties of WOWC to support their actions re: VIA Rail, I ask that this email be sent to all SWEA and WOWC members with a request to support St. Thomas, Elgin, Oxford & Norfolk in our quest to retain this rail service. Such support could take the form of contact with your MPP & MP expressing a desire to see this issue dealt with expeditiously to a positive conclusion.

Thank you in advance.

---Original Message---
From: Dennis Travale [mailto:Dennis.Travale@norfolkcounty.ca]
Sent: Saturday, December 07, 2013 10:32 AM
Subject: Closure - Rail Line - Elgin/Oxford/Norfolk - Another Economic Blow to Rural Ontario

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