

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

1ST SESSION, 44TH LEGISLATURE, ONTARIO
3 CHARLES III, 2025

Bill 21

**An Act to establish the Foodbelt Protection Plan Advisory Committee
and amend the Planning Act to protect agricultural land**

Co-sponsors:

Mr. M. Schreiner

Ms B. Brady

Private Members' Bill

1st Reading May 13, 2025

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill enacts the *Protect our Food Act, 2025*.

The Bill establishes the Foodbelt Protection Plan Advisory Committee. The Committee's function is to make recommendations for a Foodbelt Protection Plan that would ensure the preservation and enhancement of a geographically continuous land base.

The Bill also amends the *Planning Act* with respect to land that is zoned for prescribed agricultural uses. The Bill provides that the land cannot be rezoned, and the uses permitted on the land cannot be changed, unless an Agricultural Impact Assessment has been carried out. The restriction applies to a municipality passing a zoning by-law and to the Minister making a Minister's Zoning Order.

**An Act to establish the Foodbelt Protection Plan Advisory Committee
and amend the Planning Act to protect agricultural land**

His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Foodbelt Protection Plan Advisory Committee

1 (1) An advisory committee is established under the name Foodbelt Protection Plan Advisory Committee in English and Comité consultatif sur le plan de protection de la ceinture alimentaire in French.

Composition

(2) The Committee shall be composed of members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council from the following groups:

1. Farmers.
2. Agricultural experts.
3. Soil scientists.
4. Professional planners.
5. Food and agricultural organizations.

Deadline

(3) The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall appoint the members of the Committee within 60 days after the day this Act receives Royal Assent.

Functions

(4) The Committee shall develop recommendations for a Foodbelt Protection Plan that would ensure the preservation and enhancement of a geographically continuous agricultural land base, including recommendations respecting each of the following matters:

1. The identification of farmland that will be included in the Foodbelt so that a geographically continuous agricultural land base can be preserved.
2. Protections for farmland in the Foodbelt from conversion to non-farm uses by prohibiting or restricting development.
3. Exceptions from the protections in the Foodbelt Protection Plan, such as for the sale of local agricultural goods, public health services, agritourism, education or on-farm processing of agricultural products.
4. Measures to reduce land speculation in the Foodbelt, which may include promoting the use of land trusts or succession planning.
5. Setting goals for the enhancement and protection of land and soil health in the Foodbelt and strategies for implementation.
6. The restriction of aggregate extraction in agricultural areas in the Foodbelt.
7. Any additional protections for farmland in the Foodbelt.

Consultation

(5) In developing its recommendations, the Committee shall consult broadly with the entire agricultural community and ensure that any recommended restrictions in the Foodbelt Protection Plan reflect the needs and challenges faced by the community.

Report

(6) The Committee shall prepare and publish a report setting out its recommendations with respect to the matters referred to in subsection (4) within 12 months after the day this Act receives Royal Assent.

Same

(7) The Committee shall make the report publicly available on a website of the Government of Ontario and shall send it to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness.

Report on implementation of recommendations

(8) On or before the day that is 60 days after the day the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness receives the Committee's report under subsection (7), the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness shall report to the Assembly on the progress the Government of Ontario has made in implementing the Committee's recommendations.

If Assembly not in session

(9) For the purposes of subsection (8), if the Assembly is not in session at the end of the 60-day period, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness shall table the report as early as possible in the next session.

Planning Act

2 Part V of the *Planning Act* is amended by adding the following section:

Agricultural Impact Assessment

Application

33.1 (1) This section applies with respect to land that was zoned for prescribed agricultural uses as of the day the *Protect Our Food Act, 2025* came into force.

Restriction on change to zoning by-law

(2) Despite anything in this Part, the council of a local municipality shall not pass a zoning by-law that purports to change the uses permitted on the land or the zoning of the land itself unless an Agricultural Impact Assessment has been carried out in accordance with the regulations.

Restriction on Minister's zoning order

(3) Despite anything in this Part, the Minister shall not make an order under section 34.1 or 47 that purports to change the uses permitted on the land or the zoning of the land itself unless an Agricultural Impact Assessment has been carried out in accordance with the regulations.

3 Subsection 70 (1) of the Act is amended by adding the following clause:

- (b) for the purposes of section 33.1,
 - (i) prescribing agricultural uses, and
 - (ii) governing Agricultural Impact Assessments;

Commencement

4 This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

Short title

5 The short title of this Act is the *Protect Our Food Act, 2025*.