

Working With Farmers To Protect Threatened Bird

McGuinty Government Proposal Supports Ontario Farmers

NEWS

April 15, 2011

Ontario is working with farmers to help continue farming while protecting the bobolink, a threatened bird that nests in grasslands and hay fields.

The proposed changes would give farmers a [three-year exemption from Endangered Species Act requirements](#) on haying or using pasture lands. This will give farmers more certainty and allow them to continue their operations, while a longer term approach is developed to protect bobolinks and their habitat.

To help ensure bobolink persistence and recovery, the government is committed to supporting:

- dedicated and targeted funding for stewardship incentives for bobolink
- the establishment of short-term applied research pilot projects
- targeted outreach and extension services to support landowner activities that enhance the conservation of bobolink
- recognition for outstanding grassland stewardship.

Ontario will create an advisory group to provide advice on how to realize these goals.

The proposed changes are part of Ontario's [Open for Business](#) initiative to create faster, smarter and streamlined government-to-business services, and a more competitive environment for businesses – supporting jobs for Ontario families and protecting our environment.

QUOTES

"Farmers have always been important stewards of the land where many endangered species make their homes. We'll continue to work with our farmers to make sure that the measures we take to protect the bobolink are reasonable yet effective."

– Linda Jeffrey, Minister of Natural Resources

"Ontario farmers welcome this well thought out approach and I want to thank the Ontario Federation of Agriculture for their continued advice and dialogue as the McGuinty government continues to develop programs and initiatives that meet the needs of our farmers."

– Carol Mitchell, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

"Ontario's farmers are leaders in protecting the province's unique wildlife such as the bobolink. The government's approach demonstrates a commitment to making the Endangered Species Act work for Ontario farmers."

- Bette Jean Crews, President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

"Bobolink conservation presents a unique challenge because of the bird's dependence on farm land habitats. By incorporating incentives, research and outreach, the Government of Ontario is encouraging solutions that protect the species and benefit farmers."

– Dr. Anne Bell, Director of Conservation and Education, Ontario Nature

QUICK FACTS

- The bobolink is a small black and white bird that nests in hay fields between late May and mid July. As a threatened species, it is protected under the Endangered Species Act.
- Ontario's [Endangered Species Act](#), which came into effect in 2008, makes the province a North American leader in the protection and recovery of species at risk and their habitats.
- About 200 different kinds of plants and animals are currently listed as “at risk” in Ontario.
- Last week, the province [proposed changes](#) to make it easier and faster for landowners and developers to do work in areas where endangered species live – saving businesses time while continuing to protect species such as barn owls, spotted turtles and butternut trees.

LEARN MORE

- View and comment on the [proposed approach to bobolink protection](#) on the Environmental Registry.
- Learn how Ontario is [protecting species at risk and their habitat](#).

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