

Wridgeview Greenhouses Ltd

December 21, 2020

Dear Honorable Larry Snively and Essex Council,

Re: By-law 79-20 (Light Abatement) (Bylaw) from Leamington Council

As a proud member of the Harrow/Essex community, we work hard every day to contribute to the economic health and strong sense of community in our municipality. Because we live and work here, we are aware of the competing, and strongly held, opinions that could lead to the creation of the Bylaw similar to Leamington.

My family has farmed in Colchester South for 5 generations, adapting crops and best practices as times and markets changed. From basic livestock and crops, tobacco, peaches, processing tomatoes, fresh market vegetables, orchards and greenhouse we have been fortunate to evolve for the past 100 years and provide safe, nutritious foods with a sustainable environmental, social and business focus.

Because we, as a society, consider it desirable to conserve, protect and encourage the development and improvement of agricultural lands for the production of food, and other agricultural products, and because our provincial government recognizes pressures exerted on the agricultural community make it increasingly difficult for agricultural owners and operators to effectively achieve that goal, the Farming and Food Production Protection Act, 1998 (Ontario) (FFPPA) was put in place to protect normal farm practices. As you are aware, the use of lights to support optimal and consistent growing conditions for our greenhouse crops is a normal farm practice. The FFPPA protects our rights to use normal farm practices in the operation of our farms, without impediment and without liability for disturbance to our neighbours. FFPPA also provides us with a mechanism to challenge anyone who does try to impose restrictions or liabilities on us for disturbances, including disturbances caused by light.

The current bylaw contains provisions that are unworkable and cannot be put into practice. In particular, requiring ceiling curtains to be closed completely between 8 p.m. and 2 a.m. (section 6(b) of the Bylaw) or from one hour before sunset through to one hour after sunrise, except for between 2 a.m. and from 6 a.m. when the curtains can be 10% open (section 5(b) of the Bylaw) are both arbitrary and unworkable. It is necessary for normal farming practice in greenhouses that the ceiling curtains can be open up to 10% at any time that the ceiling curtains are required to be in use. Making it mandatory for the ceiling curtains to be completely closed does not work.

I would like to work with you to identify solutions that will enable growers to comply with reasonable light abatement aspirations of Council, while still respecting our right to farm using lights to create consistent growing conditions.

All though at this time we do not operate with lights, I can not predict what future crops and possibilities will arise. I do not support a copy and paste/unenforceable bylaw adopted by your council without at least a courtesy consultation from a multi generational resident and tax payer.

I would welcome the opportunity to participate in discussions to resolve this issue.

Yours truly,

Rodney J. Wright

President

Wridgeview Greenhouses Ltd

Harrow, Ontario.