



November 28, 2024

The Honourable Senators of Canada
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A4

Dear Honourable Senators,

Re: Bill C-293

On behalf of Lac Ste. Anne County, I am writing to formally express our strong opposition and concern regarding Bill C-293, specifically with respect to its provisions on pandemic preparedness relating to animal agriculture. While we fully acknowledge the importance of this legislation and the necessity for governments to plan effectively for the management of public health risks, however we believe that certain elements of the Bill, particularly Section L, warrant further examination and clarification.

Section L, which recommends “derisking” animal agriculture and promoting alternative proteins, raises concern. This is not clearly linked to pandemic preparedness and instead targets a specific sector of the Canadian economy. Animal agriculture remains a vital component of our national food system. Any proposed policy changes impacting this sector must be grounded in clear, evidence-based risk assessment, considering the full scope of the potential consequences for both producers and consumers.

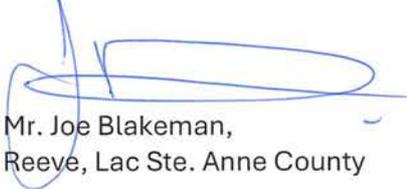
We find the language within Section L to be particularly troubling. Terms such as “regulate” and “phase-out” are vague and lack detail, rendering it unclear how these provisions might be implemented, and what the long-term effects would be on agricultural practices and food security. Moreover, the language appears to implicitly suggest that animal agriculture may be a significant driver of disease transmission, an assertion which is not substantiated by scientific evidence. We reject the notion that animal agriculture, as currently practiced in Canada, constitutes a primary source of public health risk, particularly in relation to pandemics. While we acknowledge that alternative proteins may play a role in diversifying the food system, such initiatives should not come at the expense of well-established sectors such as animal agriculture. Any approach to pandemic preparedness must remain focused on sound, evidence-based public health strategy. They should not disrupt key industries that are integral to national food security and the livelihood of countless Canadian families.

Considering these concerns, we respectfully urge the Senate to carefully review Bill C-293 and to ensure that any proposed policy aimed at mitigating future pandemic risk are both balanced and substantiated by scientific evidence. It is essential that such policy focus primarily on protecting public health, without undermining the stability of vital sectors like agriculture.



We appreciate your consideration of our concerns and trust you will take them into account as you deliberate on the contents of Bill C-293.

Sincerely,



Mr. Joe Blakeman,
Reeve, Lac Ste. Anne County



Mr. Ross Bohnet
Chair, Lac Ste. Anne County Agriculture Service Board

CC:

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
Mr. Francis Drouin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
Mr. Gerald Soroka, Member of Parliament, Yellowhead
Mr. Dane Lloyd, Member of Parliament, Sturgeon River – Parkland
The Honourable RJ Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Mr. Shane Getson, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland
Agricultural Services Boards of Alberta
Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA)