

**Ministry of Natural  
Resources and Forestry**

Office of the Minister

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354-2023-433

July 5, 2023

Mark Ryckman  
Manager of Policy  
Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters  
[mark\\_ryckman@ofah.org](mailto:mark_ryckman@ofah.org)

Dear Mark Ryckman: *MARK*

Thank you for your letter regarding Ontario's Sustainable Bait Management Strategy. I appreciate the comments and concerns that you have shared with me.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry appreciates the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters' continued efforts and commitment to helping educate anglers on the impacts that invasive species can have on our aquatic ecosystems.

Under the former bait management framework (i.e., pre-2022), bait was being moved great distances and there was the potential for invasive species and fish diseases to be mixed in with this bait and introduced to waterbodies throughout Ontario. The new bait strategy is intended to help minimize the spread of invasive species and fish-based diseases thereby protecting Ontario's vibrant fisheries and the industries that rely on them. The measures Ontario has put in place are intended to balance ecological risks with maintaining anglers' flexibility to continue to use and transport bait.

Ontario's Sustainable Bait Management Strategy was finalized in 2020 after a comprehensive review of existing and potential options as well as extensive consultation and engagement with the public, stakeholders and industry, dating back to 2012. Through this process, my ministry has heard that previous proposals were too restrictive. As a result, the final bait strategy was revised to enable greater flexibility for anglers and commercial bait operators.

I appreciate that transitioning to the new bait regulations may be challenging for anglers in some areas of the province. My ministry continues to use various platforms to educate anglers on the new bait rules to promote regulatory compliance.

The ministry is currently in the implementation and rollout phase of the bait strategy and we have been reviewing our policies and regulations to ensure that they are meeting the intended outcomes. We will be considering regulatory amendments to help address

some of the concerns that we have heard and your feedback will be considered and incorporated into our review of this policy as we move forward.

Thank you again for writing and sharing your concerns.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Graydon Smith', with a stylized, cursive script.

The Honourable Graydon Smith  
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

c: Monique Rolf von den Baumen-Clark, Deputy Minister