

December 15, 2021

Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry  
The Senate of Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada, K1A 0A4

Via e-mail: [agfo@sen.parl.gc.ca](mailto:agfo@sen.parl.gc.ca)

**Re: Senator Black's Proposed Soil Health Study**

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of the Agricultural Carbon Alliance (ACA), please accept this letter regarding a soil health study proposed by Senator Black.

The Agriculture Carbon Alliance (ACA) is a national coalition of 14 farm organizations committed to meaningful and collaborative dialogue with the federal government concerning the role of farmers and ranchers as climate solutions providers. Our membership encompasses all major agriculture commodities: including grains and oilseeds, cattle, pork, horticulture and supply management. Collectively, we represent more than 190,000 farm businesses that generated more than \$70 billion in farm cash receipts in 2020. Canada's farmers are the heart of our agri-food value chain contributing more than \$140 billion annually and providing 1 in 8 Canadian jobs.

The ACA would like to congratulate Senator Robert Black for bringing his proposed soil health study before the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry for consideration. Farmers are the chief stewards and managers of the land and they recognize the critical role that soil plays in their ability to earn livelihoods and grow food for both Canada and the world. As such, soil management is important to our constituents. To that affect, an updated study to understand the state of soils in Canada methods to preserve or enhance soil health would be greatly beneficial.

The Federal Government has most recently recognized the importance of soil health to Canadian agriculture in the proposed protocols for Canada's Greenhouse Gas Offset System. The goal of this protocol is to incentivize the adoption of sustainable agricultural land management activities, which reduce emissions and enhance soil carbon sequestration on agricultural lands. Critical to the success of this goal is a broader understanding of the science underlying carbon sequestration - an understanding that identifies data gaps and maps out existing best practices. An updated soil study would go a great ways to helping Government support producers' continued innovation in soil health improvement.

1/2



In addition to soil carbon, a new soil study could help investigate other indicators of soil health, such as water holding capacity and salinity, and identify best practices to help management them. There also remains great interest from our members in examining the influence of crop rotations, forages and grasslands on soil carbon balance and in the development of Canada-wide soil mapping. As Senator Black has emphasized, Parliament has not studied soil since 1984's report on "Soil at Risk: Canada's eroding future". A new study would allow the Senate to look at soil and its role in food security, water quality, carbon markets and climate change. ACA supports this direction and we offer our engagement on any reporting moving forward.

To date, our members include Canadian Canola Growers Association, Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Grain Growers of Canada, Canadian Pork Council, Egg Farmers of Canada, Chicken Farmers of Canada, Turkey Farmers of Canada, Canadian Horticultural Council, Canadian Hatching Egg Producers, Canadian Forage and Grassland Association, National Sheep Network, National Cattle Feeders' Association, and Dairy Farmers of Canada.

Thank you very much again for considering our support for this study.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by*

**Dave Carey**

Co-Chair, Agriculture Carbon Alliance  
 Vice President, Government and Industry Relations  
 Canadian Canola Growers Association

*Original signed by*

**Scott Ross**

Co-Chair, Agriculture Carbon Alliance  
 Assistant Executive Director  
 Canadian Federation of Agriculture

CC: The Hon. Robert Black, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry  
 The Hon. Paula Simons, Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry  
 Ferda Simpson, Clerk of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

