Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to you to express my concerns with Bill 4, the Biodiversity Act. I own \_\_\_\_ acres in \_\_\_\_\_\_ County. Farmers carry a deep appreciation for the environment and their land. From the air, to the soil, to the water, farmers are environmental stewards.

The Biodiversity Act concerns me greatly as a private land owner for a number of reasons. My primary concern being the overreaching powers the Minister of Lands and Forestry will have on privately owned land. As I’m sure you’re aware, the vast majority of land farmed in Nova Scotia is privately owned. The wording in this act as it was presented to the Legislature indicates that regulations may be developed to protect biodiversity on privately owned land. Without knowing what regulations will be developed, it’s difficult for us to know or understand how agriculture will be impacted by the act. There is the potential for the overarching powers of Bill 4 to lead to regulations that prohibit certain farming practices.

When it comes to the penalties and fines associated with this act, I find them quite alarming. Fines of up to $500,000 for a first offence, while a second offence could lead to fine of up to $1,000,000 and jail time! As a private land owner in this province, I find this quite concerning.

As an act that was initially presented to focus on Crown Land, I am disappointed with the lack of transparency around the development of this version of the act. Our provincial organization, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture is recommending that the act be revised to apply to Crown Lands only, and that any regulations that result from this Act, must be open for public consultations.

As my MLA, and as the voice of our riding, I ask that you share our concerns with your counterparts at the Legislature.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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