

LEEDS-GRENVILLE



STEVE CLARK, MPP

NEWS RELEASE



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GOV'T MUST BE OPEN TO ALL OPTIONS FOR KEMPTVILLE COLLEGE: CLARK MPP STANDS UP FOR COLLEGE'S FUTURE IN FIRST QUESTION PERIOD

(QUEEN'S PARK) – In the first Question Period of Ontario's new legislative session, Leeds-Grenville MPP Steve Clark was on his feet to stand up for the future of Kemptville College's core agriculture education programs.

Clark sought assurance from Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Jeff Leal that the Liberal government will work with any partner emerging with a plan to continue the college's 97 years of excellence in research and education, which are essential to the future of farming and agri-business in Eastern Ontario.

"Maintaining those agricultural diploma programs is an absolute priority for me, the Kemptville College Renewal Task Force and the Eastern Ontario farming community," said Clark. "That's why I felt it was important to take the first opportunity available to get the new minister's assurance he won't rule out any potential partner."

A video of Clark's question this morning is available here: <http://youtu.be/1e-BPkhuxA8>

Clark has written to Leal and Reza Moridi, the new Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, to personally invite them to tour the Kemptville College campus and meet with Task Force members to learn more about their work to date.

"It's critical the government understands the opportunities that exist and leaves every door open to make Kemptville College sustainable – whether that means partnering with the Municipality of North Grenville, an existing university or college, private career colleges or the private sector," stressed Clark.

"Being unwilling to consider every option shortchanges future generations of farmers who will rely on Kemptville College in order to remain competitive in Ontario, Canada and the world. I'm going to continue to be a strong advocate to ensure every option is kept on the table."

The government recently announced the appointment of Lyle Vanclief, a former federal minister of agriculture, as the provincial facilitator for the Kemptville renewal process.

Also in his question this morning, Clark insisted Vanclief's mandate must be focused on helping the Task Force and Eastern Ontario's agriculture and agri-business sectors implement their vision for Kemptville College's future.

"What I don't want to see – and what I know the community doesn't want – is a top-down process that results in the government dictating its plan to Eastern Ontario," said the Leeds-Grenville MPP.

Clark said he's looking forward to next week's Task Force town hall meeting where some of those new opportunities will be discussed with the public. That meeting is being held on Wednesday, July 16 at 7 p.m. in the W. B. George Centre on the Kemptville College campus.

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For more information:
Michael Jiggins,
Executive Assistant
Steve Clark, MPP, Leeds-Grenville
(613) 342-9522
(613) 213-8461 (cell)