

Writing to your candidates

A letter to a candidate is very similar to a letter to the editor. You need to state the issue, impact, solution, and benefit. Given that you have a little more space in a letter to a candidate, you can add a bit more detail—mostly about yourself, your situation, and the benefit to the candidate's riding.

1. **Get the candidate's attention with a dramatic fact or short statement of the issue. Use first person (I).** Example, *"As one of over 14,000 Canadian fruit and vegetable farmers, I am at risk of critical financial losses as a result of the lack of protection by Canada's government."*
2. **Explain the issue.** Be simple and clear and describe it in a way that people reading it will understand. For example, *"Fruit and vegetable growers in the United States are protected against losing the value of their produce when a buyer declares bankruptcy or insolvency. Canada doesn't have such protection. Because of this, in 2014, the United States Department of Agriculture revoked protection for Canadian growers and sellers, leaving us in a vulnerable situation."*
3. **Tell your story.** You can add more information about yourself here. Where your farm is, how long you've been operating, the number of people you employ, etc. Give your candidate a sense of who you are. *"We grow (crop) at my farm (name), and it has been in my family for three generations.... We employ (number) staff..."*
4. **Say what you're asking for.** *"After years of government inaction, the Government of Canada must act now and implement legislation to protect Canada's fruit and vegetable growers."*
5. **Describe why this is important to you.** *"Recently, I lost \$XX.xx on a load of produce to the U.S.. To fight for the value of my produce, I had to post a bond worth twice its value. Because I did not have the funds to post a double bond, I had to accept the loss."*
6. **Describe the scope of the problem and give stats.** Use the Issues Brief for more information. *"I can no longer afford this. Canada's fruit and vegetable growers can no longer afford this. The lack of protection leaves us at very real risk of losing our farms, and poses a huge cost to Canadian consumers."*
7. **Explain a solution.** *"The solution is simple: Dr. Ron C.C. Cuming of University of Saskatchewan College of Law has drafted proposed legislation based on the concept of a "deemed trust". It has been reviewed by Industry Canada and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. It requires little work from government other than tabling the legislation to be passed into law."*
8. **Explain the benefit.** *"Horticulture is a very important industry in this area with numerous farms. All growers are vulnerable to the lack of protection. Not only are growers affected, but also the supporting businesses that rely on the farms. The cost of a deemed trust is minimal, but the value it brings to growers and rural communities like ours would be immeasurable."*

Letter to your Candidate – Template

Dear Candidate,

As a fruit and vegetable grower in your riding, I am constantly vulnerable to critical financial risk thanks to a lack of protection from losses incurred as a result of insolvent buyers. The economic uncertainty

and threats to food security brought by the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed a glaring hole in Canada's insolvency legislation. There is currently no financial protection in place for growers and sellers of fresh produce, which leaves our sector in a dangerously vulnerable position.

Growing, harvesting, packing, and marketing fruits and vegetables comes with a number of risks. Overhead and capital costs continue to rise, while returns are delayed until the product is sold and payment is collected down the supply chain – usually long after the farmer or other seller has passed on their product. Unfortunately, the COVID business environment has put farmers in an even more vulnerable position. The pandemic has and will, over the next two years, drive businesses into bankruptcy, with impacts along the supply chain and ultimately to fruit and vegetable growers.

Our families put a significant amount money on the line to run their operations, and to provide our communities with relied upon food sources. It is unreasonable and unjust for farmers like myself to assume these risks without having an assurance that all financial commitments assured to my business are paid come the end of the year.

The solution is simple: Dr. Ron C.C. Cuming of University of Saskatchewan College of Law has drafted a turnkey legislative proposal based on the concept of a "Deemed Trust." It requires little work from government other than tabling the legislation to be passed into law, and would represent no cost to government. The impact would mean thousands of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers could know that their operations are no longer in jeopardy based on the whims of a buyer.

If you are elected as our Member of Parliament, I am hopeful you will champion this issue and push the government of Canada to create a deemed trust to protect Canada's fruit and vegetable growers from the constant and great risk of losing the value of their produce—and perhaps—even their farms.

Sincerely,