



FRANCIS M. VALERIOTE
Member of Parliament for Guelph



OTTAWA
September 2, 2009

Hon. Gary Goodyear, P.C., M.P.
Minister of State (Science and Technology)
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

I appreciated the opportunity to listen to the announcements made at Conestoga College on Thursday, August 27, 2009. As elected representatives for the region of southwestern Ontario, I believe it is imperative that we work in consultation and co-operation when appropriate to do so.

As you know, the Southwestern Ontario Development Agency (SODA) now administered by the Federal Economic Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) was announced in your government's Budget of January 2009. As you can appreciate, I was encouraged with the possibility of additional federal resources flowing to Guelph and my constituents were anxious to receive details of the initiative.

For seven months my office has been contacting Industry Canada and the Minister of Finance attempting to determine the availability of application forms, criteria and protocols to be followed in seeking funding. Numerous local manufacturers and other entrepreneurs have attended to my office in acute need of support both for the creation of new businesses and the expansion of current businesses. With the lack of credit available to them and the tardiness with which the Canadian Secured Credit Facility was deployed, we were all hopeful that the deployment of the SODA Program would provide some support as our community endeavours to survive the economic crisis. It is my understanding the program was designed to support "economic and community development, innovation and economic diversification with contributions to communities, businesses and non-profit organizations".

Clearly, your recent announcement concerning the Community Adjustment Fund offers assistance and partnership to communities. However, I urge you to make it a priority to launch the Southern Ontario Development Program to enable our community's struggling private enterprises to diversify and adjust to the changing economy. Private businesses are critical for employment in Southwestern Ontario.

I implore you to make it an immediate priority to establish and launch the Southern Ontario Development Program. There is already a considerable time constraint for projects to be executed by March 31, 2010. It would be a tremendous disappointment if your government is unable to deliver investments and fulfill its financial commitments in southwestern Ontario.

I welcome your response as to the anticipated timeline for the deployment of the Southern Ontario Development Program.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Valeriote, M.P.
Guelph