



The Honourable Rob Black
Independent Senator (Ontario)

News Release

Senator Rob Black lays the groundwork for future soil study

Winnipeg, October 2, 2019 – The Honourable Rob Black, Senator for Ontario, took part in the Soil Conservation Council of Canada’s (SCCC) Summit on Canadian Soil Health in Winnipeg this week. Today he participated in a panel entitled, “Setting the course for the future”.

Black is pleased to see a renewed interest in soil conservation, with several events and initiatives across Canada focusing on the topic in recent months. However, as he reminded summit attendees, usable Canadian soil is decreasing at a rapid rate and the trend must be reversed in order for us to be able to feed future generations.

Black recognizes that it is often difficult for farmers to engage in sustainable practices due to economic barriers. For this reason, he believes that the government needs to take a leading role. According to Black, the government should lead an initiative to collect and analyze data on soils, which would hopefully inform an in-depth plan to restore and protect this precious resource.

Upon the return of the Senate following the federal election, Black hopes that the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry will undertake a study on soil health.

“There are soil experts across Canada,” said Black, “and we need to start listening to them. A Senate study would offer that opportunity.” Such a study would allow committee members to hear from soil scientists, agricultural organizations, and other experts, and then provide the government with a comprehensive list of recommendations.

Since 1987, the Soil Conservation Council of Canada has been advocating for soil conservation, the only Canadian organization to do so at the national level. Their bi-annual Summits on Canadian Soil Health bring together soil experts, industry stakeholders, conservation organizations, educators, and other interested parties to discuss the current state of Canadian soil and plan for the future. On Tuesday, participants toured various sites near Winnipeg to observe soil conservation practices. On Wednesday, they heard from expert panels about several aspects of soil health.

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