

UPDATE ON THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY'S STUDY OF SOIL HEALTH IN CANADA



Senator Paula Simons
Deputy Chair, Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

Abstract

On April 26, 2022 the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry was authorized to examine and report on the status of soil health in Canada with the purpose of identifying ways to improve soil health, enable Canadian forest product and agricultural producers to become sustainability leaders, and improve their economic prosperity; That in particular, the committee should examine: (a)current soil conditions in Canada; (b)possible federal measures that would support and enhance agricultural and forest soil health, including in relation to conservation, carbon sequestration and efforts to address the effects of climate change; (c)the implications of soil health for human health, food security, forest and agricultural productivity and prosperity, water quality and air quality; and (d)the role of new technologies in managing and improving soil health.

As part of its study on soil health, the committee has;

- Held nine meetings
- Heard from 34 expert witnesses
- Received 12 witness briefs
- Visited the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum in Ottawa.

Deputy Chair, Senator Paula Simons will provide an update on the committee's findings to date.

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Biography

Paula Simons was appointed to the Senate of Canada in 2018, after a long and distinguished career as one of western Canada's most acclaimed journalists.

She has been a radio documentary-maker, a playwright, and an author of popular history, but she is best known for her work as a political columnist and reporter with the Edmonton Journal.

Over the course of her 23 years at the paper, Senator Simons earned two National Newspaper Awards, one for investigative journalism and one for column writing. She earned a further six National Newspaper Award citations of merit for her columns and editorials on Alberta politics.

Her work has also been recognized with awards from the UNESCO Canadian Committee for World Press Freedom, Journalists for Human Rights, the Society for Features Journalism, the Alberta Centre for Civil Liberties Research, the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Edmonton Historical Board.

In 2021, she was nominated for her first National Magazine Award, for her regular column, *On Second Thought*, which appears in *Alberta Views Magazine*. She is also the host of her own political podcast, *Alberta Unbound*.

Senator Simons is the deputy chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, and a member of the Standing Senate Committee on Transportation and Communications. She has also served as a member of the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources.

Born and raised in Edmonton, Senator Simons holds a B.A. Honours degree from the University of Alberta, and a Master's degree from Stanford University.