

# [***Senate committee holds final soil health hearing; The committee heard from 153 witnesses during 58.5 hours of testimony***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKF-0YT1-DYWW-8090-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Ottawa -The Senate agriculture committee held its final public hearing on ***soil health*** across Canada at the end of February and hopes to complete its report on what it heard and learned by late spring.

Senator Rob Black, the committee chair, said that since the first meeting on the topic about 17 months ago, the committee heard from 153 witnesses during 36 meetings, which amounted to 58.5 hours of testimony.

It also received 66 briefs on the subject from a wide variety of individuals and organizations.

Calling the end of the hearings a bittersweet moment, Black said he looks forward eagerly to the final report "which I hope serves as a valuable resource on ***soil health*** in Canada for years to come, just like ***Soil*** at Risk: Canada's Eroding Future."

It was the first Senate ***soil*** study and was completed 40 years ago under the direction of Senator Herbert Sparrow.

Back when the study began, Black said all Canadians need to understand the importance of good ***soil health*** to their well-being and how the country's food-producing ***soil*** was at risk of degradation. Healthy ***soil*** is needed "to produce most of our food, to clean our air and water, and strengthen our country's biodiversity.

"If we want ***soil*** to continue providing these services, we need all Canadians to work collaboratively to strengthen our ***soil health***," he said.

"I believe it is imperative that all Canadians, not just those involved in agriculture, understand that ***soil health*** is influenced by many factors. It is also key that they understand the potential for ***soil*** degradation remains a constant threat to the resiliency and sustainability of agricultural and natural ecosystems, which will in turn impact every Canadian from coast to coast to coast.

"Unfortunately, our ***soils*** are in need of immediate help and attention to ensure they can continue supporting and providing for our planet. Today, we are facing a dire situation as more and more ***soil*** is deemed unsuitable for agricultural use."

"Since the previous study, Canada now faces the increasingly visible impacts of climate change, such as the floods and extreme heat that we saw decimate farmland and livestock last summer, a struggling global supply chain, and population growth around the world. Healthy ***soils*** can make a difference in our futures, if we put in the effort to make changes now."

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