

March, 2016

Attention Hamilton-area Greenbelt Supporters!

We need you to take action today. Tell the province you do not support the City of Hamilton's request for significant areas of agricultural/natural land to be removed from the Greenbelt, etc. Instead, Ontario must continue to protect the Greenbelt and choose smarter growth.

The provincial government is currently discussing where and by how much our Greenbelt will grow.

Let's take this opportunity to remind the provincial government that Greenbelt expansion is critical to protect our agricultural lands, natural heritage systems and water and safeguard our climate! The province needs to stand firm and not give in to municipal demands that land be removed from our precious Greenbelt!

We are inviting you to send the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing a letter, urging him to continue championing Greenbelt expansion and protection.

Help show the widespread support that exists to grow the Greenbelt. The time for you to act is now before the final decisions are made that will shape the future of our Greenbelt.. Please contact your local MPP to let them know that you:

"... want the government to commit to grow our Greenbelt and protect the Greater Golden Horseshoe's vital prime agricultural lands, heritage systems and water resource areas. The process to grow the Greenbelt should be set with a bold timeframe to map those features and areas."

MPP list is: <http://hamilton.foundlocally.com/Local/Gov-Provincial.htm>

Here is a sample letter:

Hon. Ted McMeekin
cc. your local MPP

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay St., 17th Flr
Toronto, Ontario
M5G2E5

Dear Minister McMeekin,

I would like to express my appreciation of your forward-thinking leadership on the Coordinated Land Use Planning Review thus far—with its focus on leaving a livable, healthy and strong legacy for future generations of Ontarians.

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It is very encouraging that the climate change lens is being applied in this critical review.

I understand that the provincial Growth Plan and three land conservations plans (Niagara Escarpment Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Greenbelt Plan) are designed to work together to manage growth, protect the natural environment and support economic development in this region:

The Greenbelt Plan in particular has been effective at stopping sprawl and protecting agricultural lands and natural heritage areas.

But slow and inconsistent municipal implementation and land swaps threaten to undermine these award winning provincial plans. It is clear provincial leadership is needed now more than ever, especially as the impacts of climate change especially are being felt widely.

For instance, in my own city of Hamilton, I am deeply concerned that the majority of our city councillors have recommended to the province that large pieces of land be taken out of the Greenbelt. All of the parcels of land proposed for removal are prime agricultural land – including tender fruit lands, which are specialty crop lands that are supposed to enjoy the strongest level of protection under provincial rules! This request to the province from the City of Hamilton flies in the face of the Greenbelt Plan.

I strongly urge you to:

1. Protect our agricultural lands and our natural heritage systems. Land swaps or removal of lands from the Greenbelt – such as what is being requested by the City of Hamilton - should not be considered as there is more than enough land set aside by municipalities to accommodate forecasted population growth for the Greater Golden Horseshoe beyond 2031. Instead, the province should be freezing urban boundaries for the next 10 years.
2. Expand the Greenbelt to include additional prime agricultural land and natural heritage systems and ensure complete mapping of these system for the entire Greater Golden Horseshoe.
3. Support efficient growth in urban growth centres by setting mandatory requirements for building denser cities.
4. Foster healthy communities by requiring active transportation plans in our growth centres.
5. Address climate change by dedicating revenues from cap-and-trade carbon pricing to programs that further reduce emissions including a fund for public transit and providing incentives for energy efficient buildings and green infrastructure.

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You can also email the Minister:

mininfo.mah@ontario.ca

tmcmeekin.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org