

Attention: Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Honourable Glenn Murray, MPP, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Honourable Steven Del Duca, MPP, Minister of Transportation

Honourable Kathryn McGarry, MPP, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

Honourable Jeff Leal, MPP, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

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Dear Minister Mauro:

I am encouraged by your government's proposed changes to the Greenbelt and Growth Plans. As a Hamiltonian, I was happy about the proposed additions of two pieces of land around the escarpment. If implemented, these Plans will protect more clean air, fresh water, and local food supplies, while ensuring that the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) grows more efficiently and sustainably.

However, I was disappointed that only one of Hamilton's many urban river valleys was included in the proposal to see a whooping 21 river valleys and their coastal wetlands grow the Greenbelt. I was also disappointed to find that many communities have been left out of your proposal for an expanded Greenbelt - leaving them vulnerable to existing and future growth pressures. Growth and development in many areas beyond the Greenbelt, and in the 'whitebelt', is placing enormous stress on clean water supplies, vital green infrastructure, and wildlife habitats.

I urge you to protect our natural heritage systems, our clean water sources, reduce climate change impacts, support the agriculture economy, reduce traffic congestion and build smart, walkable, mixed use transit-friendly communities. We won't have the resilient communities we need without clear provincial leadership.

Please act to:

**Grow the Greenbelt:** Grow the Greenbelt to include additional **prime farmland and sensitive natural heritage systems**. Expand the Greenbelt to include a comprehensive protected 'Bluebelt' of vulnerable water supplies (including key headwater features, groundwater recharge areas, headwaters and surface water features). Please add ALL of Hamilton's urban river valleys to the Greenbelt. Now is the time to move forward on adding these and other valuable lands to the Greenbelt's protective fold. Ensure complete mapping of these systems is quickly undertaken for the entire Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) **with input from ENGO's and local communities**.

**Strengthen the Greenbelt:** Uplift and clarify Greenbelt Plan policies across all four plans, seeking the highest level of protection for agricultural land and natural heritage systems. Put in place new rules to

restrict infrastructure in the Greenbelt including highways, energy generation and transmission, sewage pipes and fuel lines and address fill issues across the Greenbelt.

**Stop Urban Sprawl in its Tracks:** Protect the Greenbelt for the long-term by holding the line on current municipal urban boundaries in the GGH and **freezing them for 10 years**. Land swaps or removal of lands from the Greenbelt should not be considered as there is more than enough land set aside by municipalities to accommodate forecasted population growth for the GGH beyond 2031. All new growth within existing urban boundaries must come under the new rules. We don't need to keep sprawling over our farmland and natural areas.

**Protect and Support Ontario's Agricultural Sector:** Further protect productive farmland and recognize the diverse activities needed to support the agricultural economy across the GGH by mapping the agricultural system, and adding significant farmland that's at-risk to the Greenbelt's protected area. Support farming communities with flexible on-farm zoning, permitted uses, policy guidance and other incentives.

**Reinforce Smart Growth:** Better align the growth plan with the Big Move transit plan objectives, permitting higher densities within 2 km of transit hubs in urban growth centres and provide multiple ways to access transit hubs, including cycling, walking and driving. Prioritize and tie investment in public transit with relieving congestion and servicing existing urban areas that meet intensification requirements.

**Create Livable Communities:** Support efficient development in urban growth centres by setting mandatory requirements for building denser cities while aligning growth with existing public transit, water, road and sewer capacity in towns and villages outside of the urban growth centres. End municipal exemptions for intensification targets in urban growth centres. Improve the flow of people and goods across the region by prioritizing investment in public transit, rail, and existing highways over building new highways so that the transportation network better serves and reinforces smart growth rather than sprawl.

**Make Climate Action a Priority:** The Greenbelt and Growth Plans are key to climate action success in Ontario. Address climate change by dedicating revenues from cap-and-trade to programs that restore and enhance the Greenbelt's natural landscape and further reduce emissions. Direct funds towards enhancement and securement of the GGH's natural heritage systems, at-risk farmland, public transit, incentivize energy efficient buildings and living green infrastructure.

**Set-up the Greenbelt and Growth Plan for Long-Term Success:** The success of these plans rests with effective implementation. The province must lead the oversight, research, monitoring, reporting to effectively protect the Greenbelt and guide growth, and prepare for the next review. **An empowered oversight body** will be required with the mandate and expertise and adequate resources to assist and guide municipal partners.