

## DON'T BE 'GREENWASHED'!

Durham prides itself on “striving for” a sustainable community that is preparing for climate change. But how does this square with an aerotropolis on top of the best farmland in Canada and pristine watersheds buried under runways, situated right next to Rouge National Urban Park? We say it doesn't!

GREENWASH	REALITY
<p><b>#1: It will be a “green airport”</b></p> <p><i>“With the federal lands in Pickering, we could offer a model of environmentally sustainable airport operations—a contemporary vision of an aerotropolis with a focus on innovation, investment and employment.”</i></p> <p>– <b>John Henry, Durham Regional Chair and CEO</b> <a href="https://www.durham.ca/Modules/News/index.aspx?feedid=06cd0b03-5c85-4c98-b8f4-9bc2fff297b9,afd6c417-383e-4d55-b0ec-43c96d4f448b,07762a62-62cb-46ca-83ee-d849ce531dfa&amp;newsId=7fbaffb5-a06f-4ed4-aca9-058b45762db1">https://www.durham.ca/Modules/News/index.aspx?feedid=06cd0b03-5c85-4c98-b8f4-9bc2fff297b9,afd6c417-383e-4d55-b0ec-43c96d4f448b,07762a62-62cb-46ca-83ee-d849ce531dfa&amp;newsId=7fbaffb5-a06f-4ed4-aca9-058b45762db1</a></p>	<p>Impossible to have a “green airport”. Even an airport aspiring to have carbon-neutral or environmentally responsible operations would still:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have a massive carbon footprint from years of construction, paving over 1000s of acres of prime farmland</li><li>• host aircraft which are responsible for dispersing a variety of pollutants over a wide geographic area (see below)</li><li>• contaminate the Duffins and Rouge Watersheds, Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine</li><li>• create an urban heat-island</li><li>• increase downstream flood risk</li><li>• do nothing to resolve the fact that 95% of the aviation's sector emissions are from the aircraft, not from airport facilities themselves</li></ul> <p>“An airport is not a benign presence. Whatever services it offers, whatever boost it may provide to the economy, it remains a polluting facility. No matter how ‘green’ it is, it is inescapably tainted by the business it's in. It is indivisible from the polluting aircraft that rely on it, so its existence <i>will</i> endanger the health of plants, animals, and humans in its immediate vicinity and [...] can also have a negative effect on the health of people living much further afield.” (Airports &amp; Pollution, p. 28: <a href="https://landoverlandings.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/RP-9-AirportsPollution-2019-final.pdf">https://landoverlandings.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/RP-9-AirportsPollution-2019-final.pdf</a>)</p>

## GREENWASH

### #2: Indoor vertical farming/greenhouses on the Federal Lands

*“Large-scale greenhouse agriculture would work alongside an airport.”*

– **Dave Ryan, Mayor of Pickering**

<https://www.durhamregion.com/opinion-story/7501604-recouping-canada-s-150-million-investment/>

*“Innovative solutions could see retention of agricultural uses on hundreds of acres of land, reimagined (e.g. as stacked greenhouses) to produce year-round indoor farming opportunities that will have direct access to world markets thanks to proximity to the airport. “*

– **Shaun Collier, Mayor of Ajax**

<https://www.durhamregion.com/opinion-story/9551637-why-i-support-an-aerotropolis/>

*“We can find common ground between aviation and agriculture; a place where agriculture and tourism meet.”*

– **John Henry, Durham Regional Chair and CEO**

<https://www.durham.ca/Modules/News/index.aspx?feedid=06cd0b03-5c85-4c98-b8f4-9bc2fff297b9,afd6c417-383e-4d55-b0ec-43c96d4f448b,07762a62-62cb-46ca-83ee-d849ce531dfa&newsId=7fbaffb5-a06f-4ed4-aca9-058b45762db1>

## REALITY

Growing food in greenhouses:

- is one of the costliest ways to produce a few varieties of food (<http://theconversation.com/food-security-vertical-farming-sounds-fantastic-until-you-consider-its-energy-use-102657>)
- is far more carbon-intensive than growing food in fields
- would not provide the carbon sequestration that farm soil does
- is ideal for marginalized soils but not for Class 1 farmland, which is capable of growing over 200 different varieties of produce

“On the Pickering site, the cost to heat and light [indoor growing facilities] would render their produce uncompetitive.” (Airports & Pollution, p. 2:

<https://landoverlandings.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/RP-9-AirportsPollution-2019-final.pdf>)

## GREENWASH

### #3: Flights and approach paths will have a minimal impact on surrounding communities

“[T]he flight path you are referring to [over South Ajax] is an alternate, not the regular.”

- **Shaun Collier, Mayor of Ajax** (responding to residents' concerns about proposed flight paths over Ajax)

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/ajaciansforajax/?epa=SEARCH\\_BOX](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ajaciansforajax/?epa=SEARCH_BOX)

## REALITY

Proposed flight approaches (<https://landoverlandings.com/be-informed/maps/>) extend well over Markham, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Uxbridge, Pickering, Ajax, Whitby and Oshawa. The latest proposed runway layouts have been calculated from Part 4 of Transport Canada's draft Pickering Airport Site Zoning Regulations (<http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2015/2015-07-18/html/reg2-eng.html>), published in the Canada Gazette on July 25, 2015. Air traffic controllers do not choose to use the cross-wind runway for the convenience of the thousands of area residents under the flight path. Cross-wind runways are used to maximize the safety of aircraft, flight crews and air passengers. Frequency and blocks of time used depend on prevailing winds, or on the need to inspect/maintain other runways.

Pollution from the airport and flights would not be limited to the airport property and would include:

- aircraft emissions: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen oxides, ozone, sulphur dioxide, particulate matter, aviation-related VOCs
- noise pollution
- light pollution
- vehicular traffic emissions
- urban heat island effect
- and would do nothing to resolve the fact that 95% of the aviation sector's emissions are from the aircraft, not the airport facilities themselves

“Every commercial flight in history has caused pollution. The global fleet burns through more than 5.4 million barrels of fossil jet-fuel daily and more than 1.5 billion barrels annually, all contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. Airports, for their part, not only make those emissions possible but also create pollution of their own.” (Airports & Pollution, p. 2: <https://landoverlandings.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/RP-9-AirportsPollution-2019-final.pdf>)

## GREENWASH

### #4: Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP) and airport make ideal neighbours

*"Before us is an opportunity like no other. We can find common ground between aviation and agriculture; a place where agriculture and tourism meet. Imagine the convenience of stepping off a plane and walking into nature."*

– **John Henry, Durham Regional Chair and CEO**

<https://www.whitbychamber.org/gta-east-airport-ready/>?

## REALITY

RNUP's mandate would be fatally undermined with:

- flights likely to be 1000 feet and less over outdoor recreation areas
- natural wildlife corridors and watersheds barricaded
- airport "Wildlife Hazard Zone" ([https://landoverlandings.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/18-001\\_MAP\\_33A\\_PASZR\\_OVERVIEW\\_CONSULTATION.pdf](https://landoverlandings.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/18-001_MAP_33A_PASZR_OVERVIEW_CONSULTATION.pdf)) extending into and beyond RNUP
- health and well-being of visitors, wildlife, and natural ecosystems compromised

"An adjacent airport would pollute unspoiled nature and destroy the peace and tranquility that are, and should always be, non-negotiable characteristics and benefits of a national park." (Airports & Pollution, p. 2:

<https://landoverlandings.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/RP-9-AirportsPollution-2019-final.pdf>)

## GREENWASH

### #5: Electric planes, biofuels and carbon offsetting can make Pickering a sustainable airport

*“An innovative airport could be planned as a carbon-neutral focal point of an emerging sector employment hub, developed in partnership with agriculture and our post-secondary institutions.”*

– **John Henry, Durham Regional Chair and CEO**

<https://www.whitbychamber.org/gta-east-airport-ready/>?

*“The Pickering Lands provide the opportunity to create an airport that sets a new standard for modern, sustainable and community-oriented design.”* (Capacity Where It Counts, p. 18:

<https://www.durham.ca/en/discovering-durham/resources/Documents/GTA-East-Airport-FINAL-02-05-2018.pdf>)

## REALITY

- Electric planes are in their infancy and without major and unexpected advances in battery development will be limited in range and carrying capacity for the foreseeable future.
- Carbon offsetting schemes have proven unreliable and do not lower emissions (they just shift responsibility elsewhere).
- Alternative fuels, themselves not emissions-free, are more expensive to produce than fossil jet-fuel.

“There is no clear pathway to a future in which aviation is fully powered by clean and sustainable alternative fuels.” (Airports & Pollution, p. 2: <https://landoverlandings.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/RP-9-AirportsPollution-2019-final.pdf>)