



UPDATE #76

Nov. 26, 2023

SUPPORT BILL 136: GREENBELT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2023

The Ontario Greenbelt was saved by individual voices coalescing into a critical mass of outrage and together demanding an end to the Greenbelt Scandal. It was powerful and it worked! Thank you for all you did to help push back against a series of very bad ideas at Queen's Park.

There are many more layers of this affair to be peeled back but, meanwhile, a new act has been proposed to protect the Greenbelt and to return the 15 parcels of land (including the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve) that had been severed from it.

The Environmental Registry of Ontario will be open until November 30 for public comment on the Bill.

An Easy Way to Submit Comments to ERO

Allies at Greenbelt Promise have created an automated letter of support for Bill 136 that also contains suggested amendments. You can quickly send it from here: <https://greenbeltpromise.ca/take-action>.

A Brilliant Possibility for the Future

In their submission to the Environmental Registry, our partners at Ontario Farmland Trust are recommending that the Trust become the holder of the DRAP's agricultural easements "to ensure the long-term protection and monitoring of these agreements." We fully support this wise suggestion! Find out more at: <https://ontariofarmlandtrust.ca/2023/11/08/>.

**>>> Don't miss this opportunity to support Bill 136. <<<
Want to respond directly? Go to ero.ontario.ca / Search: ERO number 019-7739.**

YES, PICKERING CAN BE A TOURIST DESTINATION

Coming soon to the City of Pickering: a new 3-year tourism plan highlighting unique Pickering attractions and events.

We were pleased to contribute to this city project as, otherwise, north Pickering might barely have figured in the planning. We were able to accentuate the many historic, artistic, agricultural, and natural assets that already draw visitors to north Pickering, and we pointed out where key opportunities for growth could be guided by good policy, a tourism mindset, (and the long-term vision of North Pickering Farms).

We expect this plan to come before Pickering Council for endorsement in late 2023 or early 2024.

Will there be cause to cheer? Stay tuned.

You can find out more about the Community Tourism Plan at letstalkpickering.ca.

NATIONAL PARKS: ONE STUDY STOPPED, A NEW PROGRAM LAUNCHED

The federal government has cancelled its study of the potential harm to Rouge National Urban Park by urban development on its borders (chiefly, on the adjacent Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve). Ontario's U-turn on its egregious plans to build on the Greenbelt rendered the federal study unnecessary.

Well, not quite. The threat to RNUP of an adjacent airport would be far more harmful – potentially even fatal – to the health and mission of the Park. We have a strong case to present to Ottawa on this matter, and there is now a new avenue by which to do so.

In October, Parks Canada, in partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), launched a \$30-million Landscape Resiliency Program to protect "up to 30,000 hectares near national parks, connecting habitats and creating protected buffers around the parks." This goal will be met through land purchases,

land donations, agreements with landowners, and other area-based conservation measures. Ten parks across Canada have been listed as potential beneficiaries of the program. Rouge National Urban Park was not one of the ten, but we will be advocating strongly for its inclusion on the list. The number of environmental harms that RNUP would suffer by being adjacent to an airport cannot be overstated.

CHANGES IN OTTAWA

The latest federal Cabinet shuffle brought good news for some of our strongest government supporters: Mark Holland (Ajax) is now Minister of Health, Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough-Rouge) is now Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, and our own MP, Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering), is now Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity). The new Transport Minister is Pablo Rodriguez, and the latest southern Ontario aviation needs study will happen on his watch. The scope of the project is still being determined. We sincerely hope this latest study will finally convince the government that no airport is needed here – as the previous Transport minister conceded could indeed be the conclusion.



AVIATION'S FUEL EMISSIONS DILEMMA

Last spring, an airport proponent told Pickering Council that “we can get to carbon zero with net-carbon zero fuel and new technology. ... We have a clear path to net-carbon zero in aviation.”

Wishful thinking at its finest. The CEO of Lufthansa Airlines has stated that, if the Lufthansa Group were to use “all the SAF currently available, it would only be able to fly for just under two weeks.” That’s just one airline group, using all available sustainable aviation fuel. Electric planes can currently manage only short flights with few passengers. Hydrogen-fueled international flights could be decades off, given the complex problems that need resolving.

Meanwhile, the sector’s main lobby group, IATA, has been banking on CORSIA (Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation) to help

it achieve its 2050 net-zero targets – but is facing strong headwinds. Recent investigations into such schemes have shown them to be virtually useless – badly planned, badly managed, badly monitored, and unregulated. They are largely greenwash. As for SAF, it has yet to be determined how the feedstocks could, year in, year out, deliver the staggering volume of fuel required by the global fleet, while not exhausting the sources or triggering a different environmental crisis or disaster.

The shortest way to emissions-reduction: curtail the number of flights. In the Netherlands, Eindhoven Airport intends, by 2026, to (a) cap commercial flights per year, (b) require airlines to use a blend of kerosene and alternative fuels, and (c) ban private jets unless electric. Spain, for its part, has pledged to limit short-haul flights, something that France has already done whenever a rail alternative exists. It’s a start.

BROUGHAM HALL STILL CLOSED

The Brougham Community Hall has been **closed since March 2020** and is in real danger of deteriorating. This important heritage building and community gathering place is suffering from neglect and what amounts to “passing the buck” by our local and federal governments, who need to act – and act now.

We are urging reps from Transport Canada and the City of Pickering to meet in the presence of a third-party heritage expert and a community observer to expedite the process of reopening.



Pickering residents, please **call your councillors and MP Jennifer O'Connell and insist that this happen**. Find out more about the Brougham Community Hall at <https://www.historicplaces.ca/>.

BUTTONVILLE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT IS FINALLY CLOSING...

... on November 30. It appears that Oshawa Airport is becoming the prime beneficiary.

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