

Teresa Patterson [REDACTED]
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REGION OF PEEL
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

To:

- ZZG-COUNCIL;
- Iannicca, Nando;
- mayor@caledon.ca;
- robin.reid@caledon.ca;
- laura.hall@caledon.ca;
- Ian Sinclair;
- Groves, Annette;
- Downey, Johanna

+30 others

To Region of Peel, Mayors and Council Members,

My name is Teresa Patterson, I'm 28 years old and I am a farmer.

I haven't always been a farmer, I've spent 9 years working as a professional pastry chef. But like so many of us, the pandemic forced me to take time off work. It was the first moment in a long while that I had the time to truly evaluate how I wanted to make a positive impact in this world. Could I do more to protect the land, to fight the climate crisis? Where does our food come from? Questions like these, brought me to farming.

Last year, I worked my first full season on a vegetable farm: and it changed my life. Going from a professional kitchen, to working outside in the elements every day, was transformational for me mentally, physically and emotionally. Challenging myself in the sun, rain, and dirt. Caring for the crops no matter the weather and through the season changes. Bonding with the earth through my sweat and labour, and seeing it answer back with incredible plant production.

In the spring I learned about crop planning, working with seeds and the planting successions that initiate all farms into their upcoming season, and ultimately can make or break their success. Putting rows and rows of tomatoes, zucchinis, potatoes, cabbages, lettuces, carrots, leafy greens, etc into the soil in such a miniscule seed form. The first seed I planted was tiara cabbage- a variety of green cabbage. I cared for these seedlings, transplanted them, watered and weeded them.

But of course the most gratifying time was of course when we began to harvest. We live in a time of instant gratification, unable to forecast too far into the future. But in this environment, I learned the value of dedication and patience. In just over 2 months of planting that tiara cabbage seed, we had full beautiful 2lb cabbage heads ready for harvest! Being able to pull carrots from the ground and pluck tomatoes from the vine that I had planted months earlier, was the sweetest form of delayed gratification.

Setting up weekly farmer's markets and seeing the joy our local produce brought to the faces of city dwellers was motivating. Beyond how this made me feel, it was also clear this impacted the community feel too. The demand for our produce was high. We routinely sold out our market

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stall and we reached our max capacity of produce boxes for supply on a weekly basis. I discovered there was a clear demand for amazing locally grown food.

It is through this experience that I came to know for a fact: farming is not for everyone, but everyone benefits from local farming whether they know it or not.

And this is why I am writing to you today, to share my experience, my impressions on what farming brings to a community, and to strongly advocate that we not throw this opportunity away for development that can be achieved with alternate planning.

If you vote in favour of the urban boundary expansion, we are losing so much more than 10,000 acres of farmland. **We would be losing that highly sought after access to locally grown food. We'd be losing the community and connection that comes from supporting local farming. We'd be losing the potential to actually help reverse climate change. Land prices would rise, pushing out the potential for young farmers like myself to obtain land. The food we'd eat would be less delicious, less nutritious and from farther away- with zero connection to how that food is grown. As a part of the Peel community, can we not recognize this opportunity to invest in ourselves and our community so that we too can solidify this for our future?**

I know that many large scale farmers in the Peel region are in favor of growth on agricultural land. These farmers sound burnt out and defeated. They are giving up. But, the answer is to not pave over more farmland! Instead, let's support these farmers! Let's give them the resources they need to succeed. Let's loosen municipality restrictions. Give them road access for their tractors. If they don't have farmers to take over their land and legacy, let's set them up with young farmers who are ready and willing to take over. This decision on the table about paving over viable farmland, indicates that there is no consideration for the new generations of farmers wanting to enter into this workspace. Once land is paved it cannot be undone. Don't choose to pave over the potential of what this land has to offer, and the potential of my generation who are making changes and seeking to enter into this area of work.

I have met dozens of young farmers like myself, facing the challenges of land access. Dozens of farmers like myself who are fighting to make a positive difference. I left a career of 9 years to fight for something that is essential; our future here on the planet. Little did I know along the way I would fall in love with being a farmer and everything it represents. But how am I able to achieve my dream of running a sustainable, productive and profitable produce farm when getting that land and having my municipal support seems so foreign?

In light of the upcoming election, your vote today will let us know where you stand. Will you choose to listen to what the youth are telling you? Will you fight for them too? That sustainability, community, connection and the future of the people, are just as important as economic growth. We have to live with the consequences of this outcome. Please make the right decision. **Oppose the urban boundary expansion.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Kindest regards,

Teresa Patterson