

From: E. McNiece [REDACTED]
Sent: April 19, 2022 5:30 PM
To: ZZG-COUNCIL <zzg-council@peelregion.ca>
Subject: Stop Sprawl in Peel

RECEIVED
April 19, 2022
REGION OF PEEL
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

Dear Members of Regional Council,

My name is Dr. Eric James McNiece, and I am [REDACTED] years old. I have been a Caledon resident since 1977 and write to you today to share my increasing concern regarding the sprawl I have observed first hand in my area, as well as the impact that this ever-increasing development has had on the health and quality of my rural property.

When I purchased my property over 40 years ago to build my family home, much of Highway #50 was a dirt route that made its way into the quaint town of Bolton and beyond into the hills of Caledon. Coming from Toronto I appreciated the quiet beauty of the area and an opportunity to escape the hustle of the city for a healthier life with clean fresh drinking water from our well and an array of animals that made the fields around our house their home. It remained picturesque and quiet for decades, but in recent years a push by local councils to ignore and rezone protected Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine areas has resulted in the loss of valuable farmland and the destruction wetlands in the surrounding area.

I have, as they say, seen it all in my life. I was a bombardier in the Second World War, I have watched the evolution of technology, and I have seen the world develop into a global community. However, in my [REDACTED] years of life, I can honestly say that I have never experienced a deeper concern than I do now with respect to the issue of urban sprawl and the current approach of local, municipal and federal government to address the climate crisis.

I strongly oppose the frequent attempts to expand the urban boundaries of the cities and towns in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and I certainly am not alone. More than 25 delegates were heard on April 7th 2022, when The Planning and Growth Committee gathered. Over 750 petitions and letters from residents in Peel were submitted all adding their voice to the groundswell of voters who are tired of being ignored as their homes and lives are being impacted by continued growth. However, the Planning and Growth Committee had already decided to endorse the staff report without concern for the impact it would have on Peel Regions long-term financial and environmental sustainability. An act seen by myself and the general public as short-sighted and ignorant. Quite frankly, it is disgusting that in an unprecedented time of access to best practices and scientific data, the committee should chooses to bury their heads in the sand of outdated politics rather than choose to be pioneers of a sustainable future.

Though it may be assumed that at [REDACTED] years of age, I do not understand current social and political ideas, I can assure you that the last century has given me a unique perspective. I understand the need for affordable housing, yet the Urban Boundary expansion provides nothing of the sort for those who need it most. Rather, it prioritizes the building of expensive houses like those that continue to appear close to my home and destroy the water table. These properties do nothing to improve our housing crisis, yet they destroy our food base and devastate sensitive habitat. In the last ten years I have personally observed the wildlife drastically dwindle while light and traffic pollution increase. In the last year, as a result of the continual assault on the water table by nearby sprawl development, I have had issues with the quality of my well water and the health of my pond. We do not need more million dollar homes built on fertile farmland. We need more developed density in areas that are already near existing amenities; communities that are walkable, accessible and encourage community building.

Decades of sprawl have cost us the quality of life that once brought people to the area with the surety that one could live in the countryside without the bombardment of noise and light pollution. The quality local soil that is prized globally for its fertility and rarity is being ravaged by residential development and unsightly warehouses. We are running out of space to sustain ourselves with fresh food and water as we give our sovereignty away to trucking depots that

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offer us greenhouse emissions to choke on as they drive out native species. Instead of being at the forefront of sustainable living, or exemplifying green innovation, more highways are built that bring even more traffic to the Region and ensure that sprawl leaves residents dependant on their cars in lieu of public transportation. The Region could easily become an example of forward thinking and innovation like neighbouring regions, but instead, short-term solutions that value private interests and wasteful consumption patterns are prioritized over long-term regional prosperity and meeting climate crisis issues.

I have lived a very long life and have seen the countless results globally of short-sighted thinking that never betters the future. I have seen a century of decisions made by those too afraid to stand up for what they knew was right. We are past the point of debating whether our choices regarding sprawl will impact the quality of our lives; they have irreparably damaged the Region thus far. Now we are afforded an opportunity to demonstrate responsibility for a future that prioritizes our stewardship to the land that sustains us.

I ask all members to see their greater global responsibility in making decisions at the Council and Regional level. The climate crisis is real. The choice to permit the destruction of valuable arable land is a choice that can never be undone. There is an opportunity in this moment in history to act in a way that leaves a positive legacy. I urge you to act in a manner that leaves a legacy that supports the environment, not one that leaves those who inherit it on its breath. Make the choice to leave a legacy you can be proud of; one that puts an end to urban sprawl and puts you on the right side of climate history.

Respectfully, I request that you please delay submitting the Official Plan until after June 2nd in order to give the public more time to have their say, and for everyone to truly understand and contextualize the consequences of sprawl for the next 30 years.

Kind Regards,

Dr. Eric J McNiece