

Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing

Office of the Minister

777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Tel.: 416 585-7000

Ministère des
Affaires municipales
et du Logement

Bureau du ministre

777, rue Bay, 17^e étage
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 2J3
Tél. : 416 585-7000



234-2023-712

April 4, 2023

RECEIVED

April 4, 2023

REGION OF PEEL
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

Nando Iannicca
Regional Chair & CEO
Regional Municipality of Peel
nando.iannicca@peelregion.ca

Dear Chair Iannicca:

Nando

Thank you for your letter on behalf of Peel Regional Council regarding amendments to the Greenbelt and revocation of the Central Pickering Development Plan. I appreciate the time you have taken to write.

The *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* takes bold action to address Ontario's housing supply crisis by building 1.5 million homes by 2031. To accommodate that growth and support the building of more homes, our government redesignated 15 areas of land totalling approximately 7,400 acres from the edge of the Greenbelt area. We also added 9,400 acres to the Greenbelt. This includes a portion of the Paris Galt Moraine and 13 Urban River Valleys in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, resulting in a net expansion of 2,000 acres to the Greenbelt.

To build complete communities, proponents will be required to develop and bring forward detailed plans for these sites that include public infrastructure. Proponents would fund necessary infrastructure upfront. Landowners will be expected to develop detailed plans to build housing quickly. It is our government's expectation that new home construction will begin on these lands by no later than 2025. Significant progress on approvals and implementation must be achieved by the end of 2023. Our message is clear: if these conditions are not met, we will return these properties to the Greenbelt.

Once again, thank you for bringing the concerns of Peel Regional Council to my attention. Our government looks forward to continued collaboration with municipal partners to get more homes built faster. Please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,


Steve Clark
Minister

REFERRAL TO _____
RECOMMENDED _____
DIRECTION REQUIRED _____
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED _____

February 10, 2023

The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Dear Minister Clark:

Re: Greenbelt Amendments and Revocation of the Central Pickering Development Plan and O.Reg. 154/03

On behalf of Regional Council, I am writing to express the Region of Peel's significant concern with the Province's recent decision to amend the Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Greenbelt Plan boundary regulation to remove or redesignate approximately 3,000 hectares of land for housing development. The Region recognizes the Province's commitment to facilitate the building of 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years; however, the removal of lands from the protected Greenbelt Plan Area is not a recommended approach to advance this goal.

The Greenbelt was created in 2005 to identify where urbanization should not occur and to provide permanent protection to the agricultural land base, water resources and natural areas. These protected lands within the Greenbelt provide crucial ecosystem functions including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the impacts of downstream flooding. Removal of these previously protected lands undermines the integrity and permanence intended for the Greenbelt.

Allowing for development in the Greenbelt encourages urban sprawl and inefficient development patterns. This type of growth is discouraged through the Province's own policies in the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan. Through its recent Regional Official Plan Review, the Region has shown leadership by inserting new policies into its updated Regional Official Plan, which are consistent with Provincial policy direction to protect agricultural lands, enhance natural systems, and preserve cultural heritage, while providing a balanced approach to accommodate growth based on comprehensive analysis. These policies protect, enhance and restore natural systems including their long-term ecological integrity and support Peel's resiliency and ability to adapt to a changing climate.

The permanently protected lands in the Greenbelt are a component of Ontario's solution to build resilience and mitigate climate change. The removal of lands undermines the Greenbelt Plan's goal *"to improve resilience and protect carbon sequestration potential, recognizing that the Natural Heritage System is also a component of green infrastructure..."*.

Nando Iannicca
Regional Chair & CEO

10 Peel Centre Dr.
Suite A, 5th Floor
Brampton, ON L6T 4B9
905-791-7800 ext. 4310

Removal of 3,000 hectares of land from the Greenbelt further accelerates farmland loss. According to the Ontario Farmland Trust in the past 35 years, Ontario has lost 2.8 million acres (18%) of its farmland to non-agricultural land uses.

The Province has not provided evidence to support the conclusion that Greenbelt lands are required for housing development and further, the Housing Affordability Task Force report, dated February 8, 2022, clearly stated that “... a shortage of land isn’t the cause of the problem. Land is available, both inside the existing built-up areas and on developed land outside of the greenbelts.”(p. 10).

While the Region shares the Province’s commitment to increase housing supply and improve affordability, with the exception of modest expansions of rural settlement areas or minor technical corrections to the Greenbelt boundary, the Region does not support the removal of lands from the protected Greenbelt Plan Area to advance this goal.

Removal of lands from the Greenbelt sets a negative precedent and undermines the permanent protection and overall integrity of the protected lands. The Region does not generally support any further lands being removed from the Greenbelt and strongly recommends that the Province take a comprehensive approach to identifying the most appropriate lands for housing based on an integrated consideration of environmental, economic and social criteria and comprehensive analysis.

Kindest personal regards,



Nando Iannicca
Regional Chair & Chief Executive Officer
Region of Peel

cc: Peel MPPs
City of Mississauga
City of Brampton
Town of Caledon