



Ducks Unlimited Canada
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May 24, 2022

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE LEADERS OF ONTARIO'S MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES REGARDING THE NEED FOR AN OVERARCHING POLICY FOR ONTARIO'S WETLANDS

Sent via email:

[Steven del Duca](#), Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party

[Doug Ford](#), Leader of the Ontario PC Party

[Andrea Horwath](#), Leader of the Ontario NDP Party

[Mike Schreiner](#), Leader of the Green Party of Ontario

Since 1974, Ducks Unlimited Canada has partnered with 3,397 landowners to conserve more than one million acres of natural habitats in Ontario. Each landowner represents a long-term commitment to nature, water and wildlife. What that means on the ground is 4,000 square kilometres of nature!

In 2021, we made record progress with more than 140 conservation projects completed in Ontario. The Government of Ontario has been a consistent investor in wetland restoration for decades. These strategic environmental investments deliver on-the-ground results that deserve protection.

Investments in a healthy, biodiverse and climate-resilient landscape deserve a secure future within a new policy framework that brings added confidence to land management and development in Ontario.

Why is this important now?

Our staff work with rural and near-urban landowners to make a difference for two of life's essentials: *water and wildlife*. And we're happy to report that landowners continue to care deeply about these fundamental issues. Water is widely understood as an essential concern of people's lives. But we sometimes overlook the importance of wildlife to Ontarians.

Our team fields hundreds of questions about migrating birds arriving from their wintering grounds and seeking to nest in Ontario. People of all kinds ask, "why are ducks swimming in my pool" or "what is this hen doing in my garden" or, more urgently, "how can I help a duck family survive in my suburban neighbourhood".

We tell them that you can trust a mother duck's instincts to get her string of tiny ducklings to water. We tell them ducklings can walk surprising distances to reach the spring ponds and wetlands they need to survive. But they do need a path to get there, and they do need access

to the habitat when they arrive.

We don't believe that Ontarians want to see wildlife threatened by solutions to economic challenges. We support the need for affordable housing—we all want to see our families thrive in an affordable economy!—and believe there is tremendous opportunity for Ontario leadership through thoughtful planning that creates highly liveable, climate-ready communities where families and friends can experience nature—just as previous generations did.

Making habitats like wetlands a priority for Ontario's future is good news for our mother duck and her ducklings. It's also good news for other birds and species of wildlife and, even beyond those benefits, natural spaces enhance the quality of life in our communities too.

I was recently appointed to the ROMA Task Force on Attainable Housing, where I aspire to encourage rural municipalities to show leadership in requiring new development to include natural infrastructure such as wetlands, grasslands and trees, in support of wildlife, climate resilience and the well-being of Ontarians.

Will you support An Overarching Policy for Ontario's Wetlands, which would show confidence in nature-based solutions? Nature must be an essential element in any attainable housing strategy and a key component of any environment plan that is serious about climate adaptation.

Ducks Unlimited Canada looks forward to hearing your position on the idea of a first-ever Ontario Wetlands Act that ensures attainable homes for people and for wildlife through planning that includes space for nature.

Here is a link to a short explainer: [1-Pager: Ontario Wetland Policy Backgrounder](#)

Sincerely,



Lynette Mader
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Ducks Unlimited Canada – Ontario
Barrie, Ontario

