

From: Green Party of Ontario <admin@gpo.ca>

Subject: AN OPEN LETTER TO THE LEADERS OF ONTARIO'S MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Thank you for reaching out and apologies for the delay in response. This email is in response to the question sent to Mike Schreiner, regarding the Green Party of Ontario's support for a wetlands policy in Ontario. Allow me to provide a response on behalf of Mike and the GPO.

Ontario Greens are fully in support of an overarching policy for Ontario's wetlands that incorporates nature-based solutions. We recently announced our plan to double the size of the Greenbelt to include a Bluebelt of protected moraines, river systems, and watersheds that includes the Paris Galt Moraine, Carruthers Creek, Grand River Watershed, and many other critical bodies of water.

Other ways we plan to safeguard our source water include:

- Working with Indigenous Peoples and the federal government to establish National Marine Conservation Areas in Hudson and James Bay, and in the Great Lakes.
- Implementing a plan for cutting phosphorus entering Lake Simcoe to 44 tonnes by 2026 and support the creation of a phosphorus recycling facility..
- Restoring provincial funding for source water protection under the Clean Water Act and expand drinking water source protection to northern, remote and Indigenous communities.
- Bringing back oversight and public consultation to reduce flooding and protect people and the places we love. Mandate vegetated setbacks along lakes, rivers, flood plains and drains.

Ontario Greens know that building dense, mixed-use connected communities is one of the best things we can do for the environment, as it cuts down on car pollution and spares our natural areas from more urban sprawl. I would encourage you to take the time to read though our comprehensive housing plan at gpo.ca/housing.

Some of the ways we plan to achieve smart growth include:

- Freezing urban boundaries.
- Developing a "15-minute" neighbourhood framework that suits a variety of towns and cities across the province by working with municipalities on rezoning.
- Reversing the Ford government's changes to the Growth Plan that encourage sprawl and revise the Growth Plan to promote healthy density.
- Requiring that intensification targets are met with distributed density throughout urbanised areas.

We plan to protect at least 25% of lands and water in Ontario by 2025 and 30% by 2030. This includes permanently protecting Provincially Significant Wetlands, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, and Provincial Wildlife Areas on Crown land.

We would protect and restore grasslands, peatlands, old growth forests, and ecological corridors between protected areas, restore a robust environmental assessment process, and repeal all changes that limit Conservation Authorities' authority. We would also provide stable funding mechanism so Conservation Authorities can fulfill their mandates.

Other policies we would implement include:

- Restoring the original Endangered Species Act, 2007
- Properly funding and supporting endangered species recovery efforts and habitat stewardship programs
- Canceling the Species at Risk Conservation Fund (aka "Pay to Slay") that allows businesses to simply offset their harm to biodiversity by paying into the fund.

We believe we have a strong plan to protect our environment, safeguard our water and ensure that everyone in Ontario has a safe, accessible and affordable place to live.

Sincerely,

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