

For Immediate Release: December 15, 2022

Statement from Phil Pothen, Ontario Environment Program Manager, regarding the Ontario Government's harmful decision to proceed with removing 15 protected areas from the Greenbelt

Toronto | Traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat, the Anishnaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Chippewas and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation – Today, the provincial government affirmed its violation of its commitment to the people of Ontario to never touch the Greenbelt. The amendments to Ontario's regulations found [here](#) and [here](#) confirm that 15 separate parcels of land totalling 7,400 acres, including 4,950 acres from the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Reserve on the boundary of Rouge National Park, would be removed from the Greenbelt.

In addition to repudiating repeated past commitments, this decision ignores the overwhelming public opposition to this proposal that was received by the government and its MPPs. Tens of thousands of letters were sent by residents and over 80 protests were held in communities across the province. Such a public response is unprecedented and reflects the level of disgust and opposition to the attacks on the Greenbelt felt by Ontarians.

The government's greenlight of bulldozing Greenbelt land will do nothing to reduce the overall housing shortage, let alone home prices in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. In addition to the vast untapped capacity to build homes in existing neighborhoods and built up areas, the Greater Golden Horseshoe region has very large areas of undeveloped land sitting unused, despite having been designated for development and included within urban

boundaries. These unused “designated greenfield areas” span roughly 350 square kilometres, an area larger than the City of Vancouver.

The government’s stripping away of these lands under Greenbelt protection does not end the fight to save them. In addition to demanding a repeal of these regulations, and the related Bill 39, we will support the public in using every legal avenue to keep the bulldozers at bay. We will continue to mobilize to stop the destructive attacks on the farms, forests, wetlands of the Greenbelt, and instead demand that our governments build affordable, transit-enabled homes and communities within our existing towns and cities.

ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE

(environmentaldefence.ca): Environmental Defence is a leading Canadian environmental advocacy organization that works with government, industry and individuals to defend clean water, a safe climate and healthy communities.

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