

January 31, 2013

Dear Mr. Chairman, Members of Regional Council,

I strongly support the decision of Regional Council to appeal the recent OMB ruling forcing the Region to open up 1000 hectares of land for new development.

This ruling flies in the face of the sustainable development principles the Region has committed itself to in the ROP. It makes no sense spending \$800 million on an LRT system to encourage downtown development and curb urban sprawl by drawing people to the core, while at the same time encouraging more sprawl by designating a huge amount of greenspace for additional development.

I am sure Council will also recognize another potentially serious implication if this ruling is allowed to stand. If the new development were to occur on primary recharge areas of the Moraine, recharge may be compromised, and the main source of our drinking water may be degraded in quantity and quality. If that were to happen, we may be forced into the Great Lakes pipeline option sooner than we want.

This would not be in the Region's interest. The Region's water managers have so far managed our water source wisely and sustainably. Conservation measures have been highly successful in limiting demand, and protection measures have preserved the quality of the resource. The Region is on the forefront of sustainable planning in Canada. If we can continue on this path, a pipeline may never be needed.

The taxpayer would be on the hook for the cost of the pipeline, if it ever came to pass. When the pipeline was first proposed in the 80s, its cost was estimated at about ½ billion; now it would probably be a multiple of that. The Region's share of the LRT, which many people complain about, may be small change compared to the cost of the pipeline.

That's why I support the Region's decision to appeal, and I hope the appeal will succeed.

Even a negotiated settlement, as suggested by Paul Britton, would not be a good idea. Negotiation with the OMB decision as a starting point would look like extortion to me. If there is any negotiation, it should be on the basis of the ROP.

Perhaps this may also be a good time to put some pressure on the new premier to overhaul the OMB system. The present system seems to act mainly as an arm of the development industry, while the legitimate interests of the affected community are ignored. This is not acceptable.

Sincerely,

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