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## **Media Statement**

### **Proposed Provincial Greenbelt “expansion” does nothing for farmland and natural areas that need protection while new highways threaten the existing Greenbelt**

Toronto: Today, the six members of the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance Steering Committee collectively panned the Province’s proposed expansion announcement since it does not include the Paris Galt Moraine, Carruthers Creek headwaters or other important lands in need of protection, and comes when the province is pushing forward to destroy massive areas of the Greenbelt with new 400 series highways.

“This announcement offers no new protection for the lands that need it and ignores the need to expand the Greenbelt in key areas,” said Tim Gray from Environmental Defence. “If this government was serious about Greenbelt protection, it would have added lands threatened by sprawl development. And it would have announced a stop to its plans to build the completely unnecessary and expensive Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass which will go right through the Greenbelt.”

“A year ago, when Greenbelt expansion was first announced, 50 groups submitted detailed recommendations to the Province about places that need immediate Greenbelt protection. These include wetlands, moraines, coldwater streams and headwater areas across the Greater Golden Horseshoe - vital water features that are vulnerable to land speculation and intense development pressures.” said Anne Bell from Ontario Nature. “Yet the government’s proposal completely ignores those recommendations.”

The full submission from the 50 groups can be found [here](#).

“This announcement will do nothing to better protect the current Greenbelt,” said Debbie Gordon from Save the Maskinonge. “The wetlands, watersheds, natural areas and farmlands that we recommended get Greenbelt protection were ignored and remain fair game for developers who want to build sprawl.”

“It’s difficult not seeing this as a Greenbelt Greenwash just before an election,” said Lynda Lukasik from Environment Hamilton “We know Ontarians care about the Greenbelt. This announcement makes it look like something good is happening and tries to change the channel from the mounting opposition to building highways in the Greenbelt.”

“This announcement is all “green” smoke and mirrors,” said Kevin Thomason from the Grand River Environmental Network. “On one hand, they’re adding land that is already protected from development. On the other hand they’re allowing sprawl development and highways in the Greenbelt. It makes me wonder if this land swap approach is a sign of things to come.”

“Ontarians should not be fooled by this announcement,” said Margaret Prophet from Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition. “It doesn’t help protect the Greenbelt, it doesn’t help farmers, and it doesn’t help us prepare for the climate crisis. Ontarians deserve leaders that genuinely care about the Greenbelt and its future and should elect them in June.”