

Media Advisory:

Citizens and Groups Plan Rally Against Proposed Farmland Severances, Urban Sprawl, and Unsustainable Provincial Plans

Province urged to amend and fix Provincial Planning Statement



In the midst of our affordable housing and environmental crises, the Provincial government is removing land protection legislation to enable the construction of inefficient and expensive detached houses on precious farmland, the Greenbelt, and other natural spaces. This housing is not affordable for most people nor is it usually accessible by public transit.

Furthering the devastation of Bill 23, the Ontario government has already overridden the successful and strongly supported sustainable Waterloo Region and Hamilton Official Plans, forcing thousands of acres of additional unnecessary farmland loss. Now the province has proposed allowing every farm and rural property across Ontario three severances with up to 12 building lots and homes on each and every farm - forever devastating our agricultural system, impairing our ability to produce food, and threatening our groundwater aquifers.

The province is proposing full-throttle sprawl that undermines sustainable, transit-supportive, affordable communities. They want to cut policies requiring efficient growth and eliminate policies protecting environmentally sensitive areas and wetlands. The government even wants to delete the Provincial definition of “affordable housing.”

The facts are that municipalities already have enough land allocated to build over 2 million homes. Focussing only on housing supply without considering affordability or sustainability will not fix the

housing crisis. There is no need to force unsustainable boundary expansions, destroy irreplaceable farmland, remove environmental lands from the Greenbelt, and threaten our water supplies.

Concerned groups and representatives from community, environmental, affordable housing, climate change, and agricultural organizations are planning a community rally this coming Saturday, July 29th starting at 2pm along University Avenue West in Waterloo, followed by speakers and a picnic at the nearby Bandshell in Waterloo Park. Confirmed speakers include Waterloo NDP MPP Catherine Fife, Green Party Candidate Aislinn Clancy, NDP Candidate Debbie Chapman, National Farmers Union President Jenn Pfenning, and representatives from Hold The Line and ACORN.

Citizens are urged to join the rally on Saturday at 2pm with creative signs at the corner of University and Seagram Drive in Waterloo and submit comments to the Environmental Registry of Ontario prior to the August 4th deadline to help ensure numerous improvements to the proposed PPS – most importantly the full and complete removal of any sort of rural severances – upholding the No Rural Severances Policy that the Region of Waterloo and other municipalities have had in place for decades.

In summary, our members and groups want to ensure a future with sustainable, affordable, transit-supported development in complete communities on already approved lands within our current urban boundaries across Ontario.

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Learn more about the event at Stop the Sprawl Rally: <https://stopsprawlwr.wixsite.com/rally> or www.50x30wr.ca

About:

Grand River Environmental Network (www.gren.ca) is a grassroots community group that is a proactive voice for the environment in the Grand River Watershed.

The Nith Valley Ecoboosters (www.nvecoboosters.com) is a not for profit, non-partisan volunteer group committed to achieving and supporting a long-term healthy environment in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships through education, action and collaboration.

Keep the Greenbelt Promise (www.greenbeltpromise.ca) is a network of grassroots organizations working together to stop development in the Greenbelt, on farmland, and in natural areas.

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