



## **OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO AUDITOR GENERAL'S SPECIAL REPORT ON CHANGES TO THE GREENBELT**

August 11, 2023

**The Auditor General's Special Report on changes to the Greenbelt confirms a profoundly flawed process that favoured private interests at the expense of public good.**

The Auditor General's Report solidified the concerns of local community members, that the removal of Greenbelt lands, including the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve in Pickering (DRAP), was indeed executed without an objective and transparent selection process. The approach benefitted donors and developers with access to the government, and involved key public service employees employed at the expense of Ontario taxpayers. The Auditor General estimated that developers would benefit approximately \$8.3 billion across the 15 Greenbelt carveouts based on an increase in land value (2016 prices). In the case of DRAP, this increase in land value is a direct transfer of public wealth into private hands ([Special Report on Changes to the Greenbelt, p. 44](#)).

The Ontario government continues to disseminate the false narrative that the Greenbelt lands are necessary to achieve the goal of 1.5 million new homes over ten years, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. As multiple professional planners have stated, and the AG confirmed in her report, there is more than sufficient serviceable land available outside the Greenbelt. DRAP, in particular, was to be protected in perpetuity and is not serviced, nor readily serviceable under the tight 2025 deadline mandated by Queen's Park.

It is well understood that removal of these lands from the Greenbelt will have significant adverse effects on the local agricultural system, wetlands, woodlands, streams, and biodiversity, and is likely to increase flooding. The development of these lands also has significant risk for Durham taxpayers through increased costs to the region and municipality over the lifecycle of the infrastructure and community services.

The AG reported that direction from Premier Ford via his mandate letter to Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister, Steve Clark, unleashed an “exercise” that was “seriously flawed and dismissive of effective land use planning.” Premier Ford and Minister Clark stated that they took full responsibility for their process, the biased and flawed exercise undertaken by their political staff but stopped short of reversing their decision to open up the Greenbelt. For Premier Ford and Minister Clark to restore Ontarian’s trust in their leadership, they must accept the AG’s 15th recommendation and revisit their Greenbelt decision.

**Today we are calling for the following:**

1. **Return** all land parcels removed in December 2022 to the Greenbelt;
2. **Reinstate** all protections that were in place prior to December 2022 for the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve;
3. **Consult** with the public, municipalities and all stakeholders on what additional protections should be considered to ensure that the DRAP is protected *in perpetuity* as intended;
4. **Develop and fund** a *genuinely* affordable housing strategy within existing urban boundaries; and,
5. **Mayor Kevin Ashe** and Pickering Council to advocate for the return of the DRAP lands to the Greenbelt as unanimously agreed to at their [December 5, 2022](#), council meeting.

**In support of these urgent requests, we will be rallying on Sunday, August 13th, at 1 pm, outside the office of Pickering-Uxbridge MPP, Peter Bethlenfalvy at 1550 Kingston Road in Pickering.**

For more information, please contact:

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# RALLY TO SAVE DUFFINS ROUGE AG PRESERVE

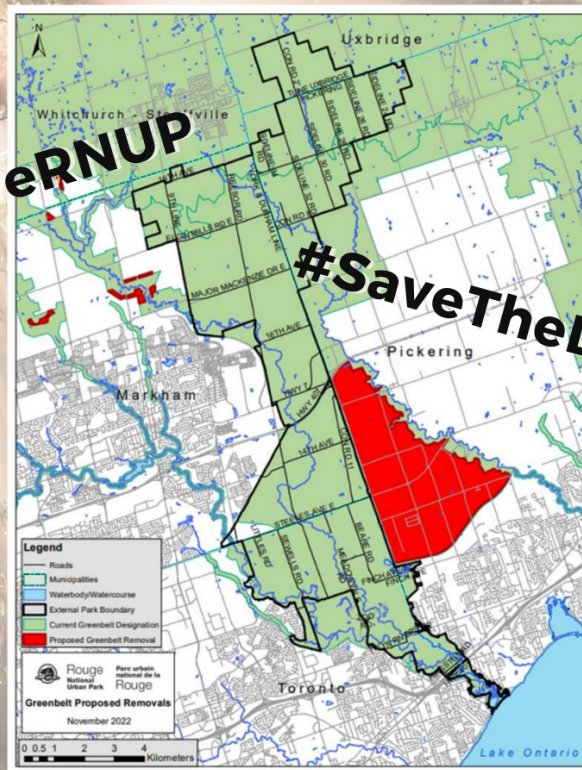


PHOTO BY JAMES WHEELER ON UNSPLASH

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 13 - 1 PM

Outside MPP Bethlenfalvy's office  
1550 KINGSTON RD, PICKERING

SEND A  
LETTER NOW!



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