



February 25, 2020
The Honorable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Province of Ontario

Dear Honorable Steve Clark:

Re: ERO Growing the Greenbelt Consultation Notice 019-3136

The Couchiching Conservancy appreciates your request for advice on expanding Ontario's Greenbelt. As a land trust, our organization protects and conserves over 13,500 acres of forests, wetlands, river valleys and natural areas around the northern region of Lake Simcoe, spreading across the Simcoe County and Muskoka landscape to the alvar plains of Kawartha Lakes. By 2025, we have pledged to protect a total of 17,000 acres. We challenge the Ontario government to do the same and more, by expanding the Greenbelt!

A way to do this is described in the report "Expanding Ontario's Greenbelt: Getting It Right". Over 90 groups and prominent individuals support this blueprint for how the Province can grow the world-renowned Greenbelt to increase the amount of farmland and natural areas that are protected from urban sprawl.

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it has revealed and confirmed the instinctual need that people have to get outside and experience nature. Although our Conservancy office and properties had to be closed at times, our nature preserves were flooded with Ontarians, distancing properly, but still desperate to connect with nature.

We ask that the Province does not limit Greenbelt expansion to one moraine and urban river valleys, but spreads it across the "Bluebelt Expansion Area". This area has been described and mapped by the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance to protect areas of high ecological and hydrological value including moraines, wetlands, headwater areas, cold water streams, and of specific interest to us, important natural areas in Simcoe County.

By doing this, the Provincial government would leave an everlasting environmental legacy for the people, children and grandchildren of Ontario for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Mark Bisset,
Executive Director

Protecting nature for future generations

Mailing: Box 704, Orillia, ON L3V 0X6 | Office: 1485 Division Rd West, Orillia, ON L3V 0X6
www.couchichingconserv.ca | 705-326-1620