

November 24, 2022

Hon. Steve Clark,
Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street, 17th floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3
Submitted online and sent via email to Steve.Clark@pc.ola.org

Re: ERO 019-6174 Proposed Revocation of the Central Pickering Development Plan

Minister Clark,

The National Farmers Union - Ontario (NFU-O) is responding to ERO 019-6174 to express our opposition to the Proposed Revocation of the Central Pickering Development Plan (CPDP). The proposed revocation and resulting deregulated development will result in unnecessary loss of prime farmland and poses a threat to critical natural heritage systems.

The NFU-O is an accredited farm organization representing thousands of sustainable farmers in Ontario and has advocated for farmers across Ontario since 1969. Members work together to achieve agricultural policies that ensure dignity and income security for farmers while protecting and enhancing rural environments for present and future generations. The NFU-O has long championed farmland and natural heritage protection in and around Pickering, including voicing [our opposition](#) in 2020 to a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) that threatened Carruthers Creek headwaters and 4,000 acres of prime (Class 1) farmland.

Since 1994, the CPDP has been effectively achieving its objectives and ensuring sustainable urban planning in Pickering. The NFU-O sees no purpose or value in revoking a planning tool that has been successful in balancing urban needs with farmland and natural heritage protection. Furthermore, the assigned housing quota proposed by Bill 23 for the Pickering Area is 13,000 homes by 2031. The existing Seaton Plan already contains a growth target of 21,000 housing units of which less than 10% have been built today. **This means Pickering already has a sustainable housing plan that can easily add the 13,000 assigned housing units within Seaton by 2031. Housing can be built while working within the CPDP regulatory framework, without expanding urban boundaries, or cutting so-called "red-tape" for developers.**

Revoking the CPDP will only lead to irresponsible housing development that threatens farmland and natural heritage systems.

Revoking the CPDP will endanger the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve (DRAP), especially if the proposed removal of DRAP from the Greenbelt Plan goes forward. One of the eight purposes of the CPDP is to ensure that the Pickering portion of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve is **permanently** protected for agricultural and conservation uses. What the government is proposing with the revocation of the CPDP paves the way for development on prime farmland in the region.

The CPDP establishes a vision for Central Pickering: of a sustainable urban community in Seaton, integrated with a thriving agricultural community in the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve and an extensive Natural Heritage System. If revoked, this vision is lost, along with 4700 acres of class 1 and 2 agricultural lands. This is short-sighted and will lead to increased farmland prices through speculation and more farmland loss through urban sprawl, directly threatening Ontario food security by undermining farmers ability to grow food close to where it is needed in Ontario's urban centers.

We feel that the forced revocation of the CPDP contravenes the provincial policy directives of the *Local Food Act*, 2013 which was created to help foster successful and resilient local food economies and systems. Removing the protections on 4,700 acres of high-quality farmland will have negative repercussions on the health of Pickering-area residents who deserve access to local food, and opportunities to connect with farmers and food production.

The NFU-O believes the CPDP should continue to guide sustainable planning in the region, to ensure that local greenspace and farmland provides economic, social, and health benefits for all residents.

Sincerely,



Max Hansgen,
President, National Farmers Union - Ontario

cc: The Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs