



Bethel Canadian Reformed Church
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December 3, 2023

Re: ERO Number 019-7684 – Proposed Changes to the Ontario Heritage Act and O.Reg. 385/21 General with respect to certain alteration requests.

I am writing on behalf of the Bethel Canadian Reformed Church of Toronto, and on behalf of many churches in Ontario in the tradition of the great Reformation of 1517ff, and in response to the proposed changes to the Heritage Act and O.Reg. 385/21 General, posted on the Environmental Registry as number 019-7684.

The Bethel Canadian Reformed Church of Toronto is part of the federation of Canadian Reformed Church in Ontario, representing over 35 individual churches and about 10,000 members. The federational seminary has been operating since 1969 in Hamilton, Ontario with five full time professors and 30 full time students.

The seminary and the churches (and related private Christian schools which number about 15) are housed and operated in a variety of facilities, structures and building throughout Ontario and in its inner cities. The care, upkeep and expansion of these facilities is a regular occurrence.

We are aware that the City of Toronto has included policies in their Official Plan that mirror the proposed legislation – specifically policies 47 to 53 inclusive, of section 3.1.6. The proposed legislation will implement the policies referenced and bring into effect what we understand and perceive to be a balanced approach to the needs of faith communities and the preservation of our heritage.

We believe that the proposed legislation is reflective of a balanced approach that in its conclusions is reflective of a reasoned and thoughtful approach to striking the needs of religious communities, freedoms generally and the intent of heritage conservation.

The efforts of the province with respect to this matter are wholly appreciated. It is a good thing where these amendments may lead to assist diverse religious denominations throughout the Province in maintaining and enhances their places of worship in an efficient manner.

Sincerely,


Philip DeBoer, Corresponding Clerk