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Tuesday 1 February 2005

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 1^{er} février 2005

**Standing committee on
general government**

Greenbelt Act, 2005

**Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales**

Loi de 2005 sur
la ceinture de verdure

Chair: Linda Jeffrey
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Présidente : Linda Jeffrey
Greffière : Tonia Grannum

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES**

Tuesday 1 February 2005

Mardi 1^{er} février 2005

The committee met at 1000 in the Radisson Hotel, Markham.

GREENBELT ACT, 2005

**LOI DE 2005 SUR
LA CEINTURE DE VERDURE**

Consideration of Bill 135, An Act to establish a greenbelt area and to make consequential amendments to the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001 and the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 135, Loi établissant la zone de la ceinture de verdure et apportant des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur la planification et l'aménagement de l'escarpement du Niagara, à la Loi de 2001 sur la conservation de la moraine d'Oak Ridges et à la Loi de 1994 sur la planification et l'aménagement du territoire de l'Ontario.

The Chair (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Good morning. The standing committee on general government is called to order. Could everybody please take their seats? We're here today to resume public hearings on Bill 135, An Act to establish a greenbelt area and to make consequential amendments to the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001 and the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994.

Just for notification, I'd like to remind everybody that although we're not at Queen's Park, there is some decorum that is expected at these meetings, so I would remind those in attendance that there should be no demonstrations of support for or against any comments made by any presenters or members of committee.

TOWN OF MARKHAM

The Chair: Our first delegation this morning is from the town of Markham. Welcome. If I could ask that you identify for Hansard yourselves and the names of those who will be speaking. You have 15 minutes. If you have any time left over, there will be time for the committee to ask you questions.

Mr. Jack Heath: I'm regional councillor Jack Heath from Markham and York region. This is Commissioner Jim Baird, and he'll be going first.

Mr. Jim Baird: Good morning. I'm Jim Baird, commissioner of development services for the town of

Markham. I thank you for this opportunity to address you from a town of Markham perspective.

Markham has been a leader in environmental planning for many decades. In recent years, there have been two major policy initiatives that the town has undertaken that relate directly to the program that the province is involved in with the greenbelt plan: First, the East Markham Strategic Review was adopted by the town of Markham council in 2003, and it recommends green space and permanent countryside on provincial and federal lands in the east end of Markham; and secondly, also in 2003, the town adopted official plan amendment number 116 to establish the Rouge Park in Markham.

Markham strongly supports the provincial greenbelt vision and we commend the province for this bold and necessary program. Your leadership will provide area municipalities with the legislative authority that we need to protect and enhance agricultural lands and environmental lands, in keeping with the provincial vision.

Markham is very fortunate by location and patterns of land ownership. The large area of federal and provincial lands on the east side of Markham will be protected through the greenbelt plan, and will provide a strong natural linkage connecting the Oak Ridges moraine down to Steeles Avenue and in turn through the Rouge Park in Scarborough down to Lake Ontario. And the draft growth plan shows the lands west of the Little Rouge corridor as having potential for future urban development. So this gives Markham a very good balance of future urban and protected greenbelt lands.

So in summary, the town is very supportive of the vision emerging from both the greenbelt plan and the growth plan alike. However, we do have some comments on administrative matters relating to the future implementation of Bill 135. Specifically, we'd like to address you on three matters which we feel require further consideration by the province. These are approval authority, appeal rights and transition provisions.

By the way, a copy of my notes was distributed, so hopefully you've got them in front of you.

Number one, approval authority: The draft greenbelt plan is a provincial document representing a broad provincial vision. It's not a local initiative, but rather a matter of large-scale provincial interest. We therefore feel that the greenbelt plan requires provincial leadership not only in establishing the vision, but in implementing the vision at the local level.

The province recently undertook a similar exercise with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act. In that case, the province is the approval authority for local official plan amendments and zoning amendments to implement the plan. Municipalities were required to pass OP and zoning amendments to bring local policy and zoning into compliance. Provincial staff modified and approved these local amendments to ensure consistency, and there were no general rights of appeal to the OMB. This process ensured that provincial policy direction was followed at the local level and that there was consistency across municipalities.

However, in the case of the greenbelt plan, a different approach is currently being suggested. This would leave the policy formulation and approval process to the local and regional municipalities, with normal Planning Act rules applying. That means that local and regional amendments would be subject to general rights of appeal as set out in the Planning Act. Any person could appeal a local conformity amendment to the OMB, which we fear would take the vision and implementation out of the hands of the province and potentially jeopardize the approval of such conformity amendments. The current greenbelt plan is not sufficiently detailed or specific and, if left to local implementation and interpretation, there will be disagreements, appeals and ultimately decision-making by the OMB.

Bill 135 currently gives municipalities a five-year window to incorporate the greenbelt plan into their official plans. This compares to 18 months in the case of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act. This extended time frame will create additional challenges in ensuring a consistent local policy framework across the entire Golden Horseshoe area.

Ensuring the greenbelt plan is reflected in local planning documents we feel is a duty and responsibility of the province. This was recognized with the Oak Ridges moraine, and we feel it should also apply in the case of the greenbelt plan. Therefore, we are here to request that the draft Greenbelt Act be amended to provide for the approval of municipal conformity amendments by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and not by local authorities or the OMB. This, again, would be consistent with the approach the province took with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act.

Our second point of discussion relates to appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board. This also stems directly from the current proposal in the Greenbelt Act to have normal Planning Act processes and appeal rights apply. In the case of the town of Markham, the required conformity amendment would be adopted by Markham council, and subject to approval by the region of York, and any person would have the right to appeal to the OMB. In our experience with environmental policy, any local conformity amendment would almost certainly be appealed and tested at the board. The OMB appeal process is costly, time-consuming and very uncertain. We feel it is unfair and ineffective to ask each individual

local municipality to justify and defend at the OMB the provincial greenbelt plan.

In addition to requiring local and regional staff time and resources, such OMB hearings would also require provincial staff to prepare and provide evidence. This would require staff from across various ministries at a scale not currently able to be delivered with current provincial resources. This would result in individual OMB hearings across the greater Golden Horseshoe area over a five-year period and would be overly expensive, time-consuming and complicated.

There is substantial risk that different OMB members, based on different testimony and different legal argument, will interpret the greenbelt plan differently through the appeal process and potentially create an inconsistent approach in implementation. We feel that the best and most responsible approach the province can take is to make the province the approval authority for conformity amendments, and to not allow for general rights of appeal to the OMB. This is the right approach for large-scale, provincially driven policy directions like the Oak Ridges moraine and the greenbelt plan. Provincial staff can then devote their time to the approval process and ensuring that all conformity amendments are consistent with the greenbelt plan, rather than years and years of Ontario Municipal Board appeals.

Our third comment has to do with transition provisions and, in particular, the Rouge Park in the town of Markham. Specifically, the town has adopted official plan amendment 116 to implement the Rouge Park. This is the culmination of a long process of planning and public input. We've been working with the Rouge Park Alliance since 1995 to prepare the Rouge North management plan and to adopt the implementing official plan amendment.

OPA 116 was adopted by Markham council on September 30, 2003, and has the support of all Rouge alliance partners, including the province. However, the amendment has been appealed by local land development interests and will be the subject of an Ontario Municipal Board hearing. We are currently in mediation with the appellants to try and reduce the scope of the issues.

1010

OPA 116 contains policies to define Rouge Park boundaries based on scientifically derived ecological criteria. These criteria, we believe, can be justified and should be used to define the Rouge Park in the town of Markham. We therefore have concern that the draft greenbelt plan boundaries overlap a number of water-courses within Markham that are also subject to the Rouge Park boundary, as defined by 116. Our concern stems from the fact that the greenbelt plan takes a different approach to boundary definition based on a set buffer standard, as opposed to applying a scientifically derived ecological criteria approach.

Different boundaries and different standards would mean that we will continue the environmental debate in Markham for years to come. There is now an opportunity to close the debate on the Rouge Park in Markham by

jointly working to implement and support the boundary definition approach contained in OPA 116.

The draft greenbelt plan provides that the province may prescribe applications, which, although they predate the greenbelt plan, shall be required to conform to certain prescribed provisions of the draft plan. We therefore ask that the greenbelt plan make specific reference to the Rouge Park lands in Markham to achieve consistency with our OPA 116. Specifically, Bill 135 and the draft greenbelt plan should be amended to make specific reference to the Rouge Park lands in Markham and to reflect the environmental boundary definition framework proposed by the town's OPA 116.

We would support continued dialogue between staff at the province, the town, the TRCA and the Rouge Alliance to ensure consistency between the documents.

In closing, again, thank you for the opportunity. We strongly support the province for your leadership and vision. The town will continue to partner with the province in implementing the greenbelt plan and the Rouge Park.

Regional Councillor Jack Heath has some further comments.

Mr. Heath: My first task is to say thank you for the greenbelt legislation.

Bill 135, when implemented, will have a far-reaching impact on the citizens of the GTA and Ontario. It will ensure that greenfields no longer recede into the distance because of urban sprawl. The land we are occupying at this very moment was, until recently, countryside.

Commissioner Baird has demonstrated Markham's commitment. We endorse the provincial initiative with three major recommendations:

(1) The province should be the approval authority. To not do so could lead to great confusion across many important municipalities.

(2) Appeals to the OMB should not be permitted. To permit them could water down the greenbelt to make it unrecognizable in five years.

(3) The boundary lines in Markham should match exactly those that Markham and the Rouge Park Alliance have developed over many years. Those lines are in our OPA 116 and the Eastern Markham Strategic Review. To permit discrepancies could result in endless appeals to staff, our council, York region and the province.

My purpose today is to discuss two other issues. The first is the permitted uses of land within the greenbelt.

One objective in the legislation is to ensure that countryside and rural communities are sustainable. Passage of the bill is the most important first step toward this objective, but more will be necessary. It is crucial to keep a significant portion of the greenbelt in agricultural production.

In 2003, I chaired the Eastern Markham Strategic Review. We established the same objectives and found several constraints, including high land prices, the negative impact of nearby urban centres and limited rural support resources. We were astonished to find how much of

Markham's rural land is already owned by speculators, including some of the greenbelt lands.

The province's ORC owns significant land in the greenbelt. As transfers to private ownership proceed, minister's zoning orders and agricultural easements on these and other greenbelt lands may be needed to ensure permanent protection.

Options to be examined include: changes in the Planning Act; expanded and enhanced land trusts; and agreements for co-operative mechanisms between the province and municipalities, a tool chest of options.

The Planning Act does not give municipalities the power to protect lands for agriculture in perpetuity. A wider range of permitted uses, such as farmers' markets and bed and breakfasts, would enhance the viability of farm operations. If our rural communities are not profitable, they will not survive. Pressure will then grow for exceptions to the greenbelt.

The minister may establish a greenbelt advisory committee. "Required" is a better word, in my opinion. My main point is that, in order to ensure progress, the committee needs the power to report yearly, as well as to recommend legislative improvements to the minister. The call for a full review after 10 years is commendable.

My second purpose is to endorse a much stronger Rouge Park as security for the greenbelt in the east GTA. Over the past decade, many municipalities, including Markham, have been soldiering on through the Rouge Park Alliance. Our effort: to create the largest urban park in the world. Much has been accomplished, but it's been very tough. Work evolves with numerous planning documents. A master plan for the Little Rouge has just begun, yet the park has few staff and fewer financial resources.

Bill 135 is an important piece of the puzzle. By recommending a 600-metre corridor along the Little Rouge, the province enhanced Rouge Park significantly. Much more is needed. Impatience grows. Developing the park has taken far too long, and both senior governments are partly responsible.

If the greenbelt is to be successful, is it not time to elevate Rouge Park to a national park? Many of the land components already exist: from the north, there is the Oak Ridges moraine, the federal green space, the west end of the now much smaller Pickering airport proposal, the ORC lands, Markham and TRCA sections, and the original park in Toronto.

Certainly, this park will guarantee a major portion of the greenbelt in perpetuity. The next step should be to concentrate on the uniqueness of Rouge Park. When it becomes a reality, the environmental objectives of Bill 135 will live forever.

In conclusion, stick to your guns. Congratulations on a job well begun. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Heath, you spoke well. Thank you. You gave yourself 15 seconds for questions, which does not give me enough time to offer any to our committee. Thank you very much for your delegation, gentlemen.

ONTARIO SEWER AND WATERMAIN
CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

The Chair: Our next delegation will be from the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association. Welcome, gentlemen. If you could identify yourselves for Hansard, you will have 15 minutes after you've introduced yourselves. Should you leave any time, all three parties will ask you a question with the remaining time.

Mr. Sam Morra: Certainly. My name is Sam Morra, and I'm the executive director of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association. I'll be speaking first and will be followed by Mr. DeGasperi from TACC Construction.

We represent over 700 members that install and supply the vast underground network of clean-water arteries and sewage veins of the province of Ontario. We've been very active in the area of provincial policy-making. We were participants in the Walkerton inquiry and continue to lead the campaign for full-cost pricing and accounting for water and sewage services.

Ontario's challenges of managing growth cannot be underestimated. The Golden Horseshoe in particular is a magnet for growth, and in fact has outpaced the rest of Canada by a margin of 3 to 1.

The OSWCA has always advocated that there is a strong role for government in balancing growth with a myriad of public policy issues, including: maintaining an efficient land use pattern; ensuring that appropriate and modern infrastructure capacity is in place; protecting significant environmental areas; and providing sound economic development opportunities for all Ontarians.

For many years, however, we have been concerned by the one-off approaches to planning and development, ones that fail to take into account the long-term implications of public policy decisions. It is our belief that to meet the government's clear objective of creating sustainable urban areas, there must be a more holistic vision for this process. Respectfully, we are concerned that this bill and your accompanying greenbelt plan signal that the government may be headed in the opposite direction and moving back to piecemeal planning.

Our concern is that Bill 135, on its own, is lacking a correlating land needs and infrastructure strategy. We know that, along with the greenbelt, the government has introduced its own bill related to a growth management plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe. But that vision for planning is not entrenched in legislation yet, and we wonder if that means we are getting ahead of ourselves.

We want to lend support to our colleagues in the development industry when they contend that this bill may significantly impact the supply of housing and employment lands. This has already led to a rise in land prices and a further escalation in the cost of new and resale housing, and may jeopardize Ontario's economic prosperity and competitiveness relative to other Great Lakes urban areas.

The question that this committee needs to consider is whether this legislation establishing the greenbelt, espe-

cially in the absence of the final growth management plan, will effectively facilitate the future growth management exercises that are ongoing.

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We'd now like to take you through some of the province's historic approaches to planning, while raising some relevant questions about whether or not this legislative tool will allow Ontario to meet its future needs.

In the late 1980s, the combination of a surge in new housing demand and an inadequate supply of serviced or readily serviceable land in the GTA led to a significant rise in housing prices, both new and resale, as a result of low inventories. In an effort to bring equilibrium to the marketplace, in 1989 the David Peterson government introduced the Land Use Planning for Housing policy statement that contained policies requiring official plans to ensure a 10-year housing supply covering a range of housing types. This policy was adopted by the NDP in their comprehensive provincial policy statement in 1994. When the provincial policy statement was amended in 1997 during the Conservative administration, it was recognized that a longer-term, 20-year view of land supply was warranted to respond to the dynamics of the economy. And now the provincial policy statement is being reviewed again and Bill 26 has brought further change to make this statement binding on municipalities—another strong and effective tool.

What's the lesson from all of this? The adequacy of designated land is a key public policy issue and an economic issue that cannot be ignored. It has caused governments of all stripes to respond in order to ensure a balanced marketplace featuring affordability through a range of housing types.

Our association wanted to be clear that this committee understands the impact of this bill in meeting Ontario's future needs. It's clear from your Greenbelt Task Force that you acknowledge that a new approach to transportation and infrastructure planning is needed to recognize the related future needs of the province. The task force also understands that this should not be done in a vacuum. The question is whether the passage of Bill 135 is putting the cart before the horse. Perhaps what might be more appropriate before this bill proceeds is that the government complete its critical work in the area of growth management.

Let's recall what our municipalities must currently do when considering an urban expansion. They already prepare exhaustive studies. They also have to prepare official plan amendments. The process takes years from start to finish.

We clearly understand the desire of the government to establish a greenbelt. But we would encourage caution and the completion of the processes that have already begun in the development of a comprehensive growth management strategy first. This needs to include some future urban areas to accommodate the explosive growth in the greater Golden Horseshoe.

Let me now comment specifically on the water and sewage infrastructure policies contained within the

greenbelt plan. We are concerned that the wording of section 4.2.2 unnecessarily introduces a new standard to be met for infrastructure approvals that will undoubtedly extend the timing of reviews or approvals and create delays due to debate over the interpretation of this policy. Counter to what we know is the intent of your plan, this policy introduces uncertainty to the process of infrastructure delivery. Perhaps you might consider amending the first bullet to read, “Sustainable sewer and water servicing can be provided that minimize and mitigate impacts to natural features and functions....”

Infrastructure must be built through the greenbelt. We firmly believe that this policy, as currently written, will frustrate the timely delivery of sewer and water servicing. It is our position that approved infrastructure must be permitted to proceed without a new layer of studies and approvals.

A healthy land development industry, operating within an efficient and balanced planning framework, is critically important to the economic health of this province. Economic growth and development are inextricably linked to policy, legislation and the planning process. When the system operates in balance, the industry is able to respond to the dynamic needs of Ontario’s industrial, commercial and residential consumers while contributing to the protection of the natural environment and dedication of lands for public open space.

We at the OSWCA understand clearly the policy intentions of this government. We clearly understand the desire of the government to establish a greenbelt and to move forward on its campaign commitments. But we recommend the following: delay passage of Bill 135 to ensure consistency with other provincial planning legislation policy reviews and initiatives; complete the growth plan and infrastructure plan prior to Bill 135; ensure that any plan produces all of the tools to support the required infrastructure needs for future growth; and utilize and expand existing infrastructure, such as water and sewage, transit and transit corridors, and highways and roads. This is the most economical approach for the taxpayers of Ontario.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to address this committee today. I would now like to introduce to Mr. Silvio DeGasperis, president of TAAC Construction and a major member of our association.

Mr. Silvio DeGasperis: Good morning, Chair and members of the committee. How much time do we have left?

The Chair: Six minutes.

Mr. DeGasperis: I would like to tell the committee about two major errors in the greenbelt draft plan. The first is within the city of Vaughan, which is attached as schedule 1 of my submission. This area has sanitary and water across the road. This area is anticipated to be a growth area by the city of Vaughan and the region of York. There has been infrastructure investment by the city of Vaughan, the region of York and landowners in this area. York region is spending \$60 million on the Bathurst-Langstaff sanitary trunk to accommodate north

Vaughan and approximately \$200 million on a water distribution system. The landowners have paid \$25 million to over-size sewer pipe, and an interchange at Teston Road at Highway 400 worth \$15 million is in the design and approval stage. This is a total of \$300 million of infrastructure paid by York region, the city of Vaughan, the landowners and the taxpayers of Ontario. The greenbelt draft plan shows this area as countryside. This is not smart growth.

The other area where there is a major error in the greenbelt plan is Cherrywood, located in the city of Pickering, shown on map number 2. This area is located between Finch Avenue to just north of Taunton Road, which is Steeles Avenue, adjoining the city of Toronto. This area is a logical extension of the growth in the city of Pickering, which completed a growth management study in this area and Seaton. The study was adopted by council.

Cherrywood is 50% less expensive than Seaton to service. Cherrywood has approximately \$100 million worth of infrastructure in the ground: water reservoirs; a water distribution system, pipes in the ground; a water tower built; an interchange off Highway 407, and six roads south to Highway 401, Highway 2 and Finch Avenue. But the province wants to develop only Seaton, which has no infrastructure in place and needs to spend approximately \$200 million to service that area. This is not logical or smart growth; it is self-serving for the province, which owns Seaton. However, the infrastructure required to service Seaton—transit, roads and other infrastructure—has to come through the Cherrywood area.

I ask this panel, where is smart growth? Who is watching the government spending taxpayers’ money to accommodate growth? Hazel McCallion, chair of the Smart Growth panel, in a letter to Pickering—that’s also attached—states, “I want to make it very clear that the Smart Growth panel strongly recommended to the province that development occur where infrastructure is either already present or close by and that this should determine which areas should proceed first.” I ask the panel, where is the transparency in the greenbelt recommendation on science and economics?

There is also a letter attached from Jim Faught, who is a member of the Greenbelt Task Force, to the city of Pickering. I ask the panel, where are the agricultural studies that the government was to have done?

Ron Bonnett, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, in a letter to municipal affairs on the Duffins-Rouge agricultural lands, or, as otherwise known, Cherrywood: “This preserve is more about ideology than pragmatism.”

Included in my submission is a letter from the mayor of Vaughan to Minister Gerretsen and a council resolution, a letter from Victor Doyle, who thinks the city of Vaughan is still a township, and a response from MPP Mario Racco, representing the city of Vaughan. Also, there’s a city of Pickering resolution approving a growth management study.

1030

Finally, is the Premier going to fulfil the promise he made in a letter to Neil Rodgers, president of UDI? I quote from the letter, which is attached: "Municipalities deliver invaluable services that are essential to the quality of life of all Ontarians, and they need the tools to control their own planning. It is vitally important that municipal councils be able to properly plan for the growth and prosperity of their communities." Thank you.

The Chair: You left yourself two minutes, so I'm going to give about 45 seconds to each party. The official opposition?

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Thank you for your presentation. I liked your presentation on mapping errors. Quite frankly, if we had one for every presentation, the weight would probably collapse this table. In Caledon alone, there were 69 mapping errors identified by the municipality. Folks, is this really based on science or more so political science?

Mr. DeGasperis: We believe it's political science.

The Chair: Ms. Churley?

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Well, I only have 45 seconds. Do you think the greenbelt infrastructure will frustrate attempts to use the greenbelt to curb growth, or will we see more leapfrog development? There's no time to frame these questions properly. But because of the boundaries now, the concern is what's been left out. Will that create more of a problem with leapfrog development?

Mr. DeGasperis: I believe it will create more leapfrogging. If you drive down the 400 every day, it is bumper to bumper from Barrie down to the city of Toronto, and—

The Chair: Thank you. From the government side?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): Just a quick comment about your mapping errors. You need to understand that this legislation is enabling legislation. Bill 135 just does that. The draft plan is exactly that. All these types of things such as mapping errors are being studied by the ministry in order to be put into the final plan, which we will see later. But that's not the subject of this particular bill. This is enabling legislation at this point. Thank you very much for your presentation.

The Chair: Thank you, gentlemen, for coming out.

CONCERNED CITIZENS OF KING TOWNSHIP

The Chair: Our next delegation is the Concerned Citizens of King Township. Welcome. Could you state your name and the group you represent? You will have 15 minutes to speak. Should you leave time at the end of your deputation, each party will be able to ask you questions.

Ms. Andrea Loeppky: Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Andrea Loeppky and I'm with the group Concerned Citizens of King Township. Our organization has been working over

the last 30 years to input on planning, to ensure that we protect the rural character and the natural environment within the township. My comments today have been prepared by members of our board. I have a few comments on the act, but first I'd like to take a few minutes to discuss some of our issues with respect to the region in general.

For the record, Concerned Citizens of King Township wholeheartedly supports attempts to halt urban sprawl and preserve what is left of the countryside, through provincial policy contained in the Oak Ridges moraine plan legislation, the Smart Growth initiative and the Golden Horseshoe greenbelt plan. We welcome the opportunity to provide input into these plans through providing comments to the appropriate ministries.

The Golden Horseshoe has been identified as one of the fastest-growing regions in North America, soon to be probably the third-largest. It's estimated that over the next 25 years the GTA region will see another four million people. This is a result of immigration and migration from other regions within Ontario and Canada. This means that essentially the size of the GTA will double—growth that seems unfathomable and, in our view, is the result of poor planning. We believe the majority of residents in the GTA would agree that there should be a limit to how large this region will become and that it's the province's responsibility to set clearly defined limits and implement strategies now to ensure that future growth in the Golden Horseshoe is controlled. We would like to see more incentives to encourage economic growth in larger urban centres in other areas of the province, outside of the GTA or the Golden Horseshoe. These communities would clearly benefit from the population stability or even population growth.

We support the protection of farmland, open spaces and minimal population growth in rural areas, especially those that surround current urban centres. The government recognizes the importance of agricultural lands around these urban centres; however, at the current rate, I think you're aware that by 2031, 1,000 square kilometres will be gone, which is an area twice the size of Toronto, and 92% of this land is prime farmland. It is therefore very concerning to witness the backlash from farmers who oppose the greenbelt plan because of the lost opportunity to cash in on land speculation. There is a real problem if prime farmland in Ontario is not profitable enough to sustain these families who live on the land. We believe that the government needs to find real solutions to address this issue. We need to ensure that prime farmland is kept or made productive and that our farmers can make a decent living without looking for the big payout to subsidize their retirement.

In terms of planning for future growth, we agree that the focus of development must be intensification within existing settlement borders. We recognize that there will be a fair amount of resistance to this type of development, as many believe that everyone should have their own patch of green space. For this reason, we are concerned about the provision for municipalities to have

a one-time opportunity to expand their urban boundaries before the greenbelt plan is finalized.

CCKT represents the interest of residents of who live in King township, which is a rural community spanning about 300 square kilometres. Roughly half of the population lives outside the three villages of King City, Schomberg and Nobleton, and 10% of our population is involved in agriculture or natural resources. Most of the township is on the moraine, and the Holland Marsh is at the northern boundary. While our residents enjoy the rural quality of King township, the issue is that growth there is in sharp contrast to neighbouring communities in York region, including Vaughan, Woodbridge, Maple, Richmond Hill, Oak Ridges, Aurora and Newmarket. New residential development and some commercial development continue to increase at a frightening pace. Our population of just under 20,000 now represents only 2.4% of the population of York region. Consequently, there are times when the interests and priorities of the region are in stark contrast to those of King township, particularly when it comes to infrastructure. The demand for more and more servicing to support development is a consequence of the growth in the region, and we in King township feel this pressure, particularly when it comes to transportation corridors and water.

On the topic of transportation, we encourage the province to move forward with its plans to establish more integrated transportation networks that improve the movement of goods and services throughout the GTA. I think everyone is aware of the problems with traffic on the highways and the fact that 70% of the highways are at total capacity at rush hour, which may be 18 hours a day. So we believe that obviously transit should be the first priority for investment by the province. In particular, overdue is the need to expand GO train services, to expand schedules and the number of trains, and add connections linking east and west communities.

The amount of road space taken up by large transport trucks is also an issue, and it significantly impacts traffic congestion on the highways. So improvements to mainline rail corridors and incentives for industry to use rail, rather than trucking their goods to market, need to be a priority.

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Regarding the north-south corridor, extending GO train service to Barrie, in concert with other transit expansions and greater use of rail for shipping, should result in a significant reduction in traffic on Highway 400.

We strongly oppose York region's request to expedite the northern extension of Highway 427 from Vaughan through King township. This is an unnecessary investment. We don't believe that another major north-south corridor within an eight-kilometre proximity to Highway 400 is an appropriate expenditure. We believe that rather than creating more 400-series highways, we should be focusing on expanding the transit network.

A related issue is the government's proposal to streamline the environmental assessment process for transit

initiatives. I believe this is in blatant contradiction to the government's claim that protecting the environment is of critical importance. There should be no room for taking shortcuts when it comes to assessing impact on the environment.

On the topic of water, it has been recognized that growth in the GTA has outpaced water and waste water services. This has become a significant issue in York region, particularly in King township. It has been suggested in the government's Smart Growth plan that communities with water supply issues should invest in Great Lakes-based water systems, but this appears to be in contrast to the greenbelt plan, which suggests that water should be dealt with locally. We see this as being more appropriate, since reliance on Great Lakes water for the GTA is short-sighted, in light of the rising problem with the diminishing quantity and quality of water in Lake Ontario.

We believe that the government is headed in the wrong direction by allowing municipalities, especially those on the moraine, to move away from reliance on local water sources and waste water treatment facilities because local capacity impedes the ability to grow the community.

The issue of local water is important to us in King township because more than half the households in King rely on individual or local water and waste water systems. The Oak Ridges moraine plan was developed to protect our water in the aquifer. However, by allowing the hookup of King City to the York-Durham sewer system, vast quantities of local aquifer water will be removed from the moraine, flushing sewage down the pipe which will eventually end up in Lake Ontario. This deficit from the removal of water through the sewage system amounts to approximately 20% of the Young Street aquifer permitted taking by York region. So 20% of York region's water is going to service a village of 5,000 people.

So I would say don't be fooled into thinking that the Oak Ridges moraine plan will take care of protecting ground and surface water, or aquifer water for that matter, as evidenced by the approval of the hookup to the YDSS. It's in everyone's best interest for the government, moving forward, to take a stronger stand on this issue by stopping the removal of clean water from the Oak Ridges moraine. Also, it's the province's responsibility to ensure that growth management plans are implemented in recognition and protection of water capabilities.

The next point is around mineral extraction. Obviously it has the full support of the provincial government even in prime farmland and on environmentally sensitive lands on the moraine and the Niagara Escarpment, as long as the industry repairs the land to its original condition. According to the Environmental Commissioner, though, there is evidence that indicates that land is being degraded at a much faster rate than it is being rehabilitated. Between 1992 and 2000, approximately 5,500 hectares of land were degraded and have been left unrehabilitated.

We're particularly concerned about this, because it alters the water drainage patterns, disrupts stream flows and destroys the capacity to store water. Over time, this results in shortages to our local source of drinking water, and removal of sand and gravel disturbs the natural filtering effect, resulting in poorer water purity.

Because of the environmental impact on our water, aggregate operations on the Oak Ridges moraine and greenbelt-protected countryside should be strictly limited. The government frequently cites the importance of aggregates to the province. However, evidence suggests that currently in Ontario there is little being done to conserve aggregates; in fact, less than 5% of construction aggregates are recycled. We believe that the government needs to take a strong position to develop specific strategies and objectives to increase recycling of construction materials, otherwise it ends up in landfill—which brings me to my final comment.

The proposed greenbelt plan and the Oak Ridges moraine plan include policies that leave the door wide open for the government to locate infrastructure on prime farmland, wetlands and wilderness areas, as long as the need can be demonstrated. We strongly disagree with this position in allowing all types of infrastructure—including dumps, landfill sites—in the protected countryside, particularly when they are counter to the objectives of the Greenbelt Act.

This concludes my general comments. I have two comments specific to the act.

The first is regarding clause 5(j), which states that “the development of transportation and infrastructure” should proceed in “an environmentally sensitive manner.” We feel this is too general. The statement should be strengthened. Maybe the text could be changed to “development should proceed without negatively impacting the environment.”

In 6(2)(d)(ii), the act states that the plan will set policies for “the development of major servicing, communication and transportation systems.” In order to provide better directive to the plan, we feel that the wording in the act must be tightened to ensure two things: (1) that policies related to infrastructure will be restricted in the protected countryside areas and proceed only where all alternatives have been given equal consideration and no other alternatives exist; and (2) that the greenbelt plan should override Bill 136, Places to Grow, in relation to the expansion of new transportation corridors in the protected countryside area.

This concludes our comments related to the wording in the act.

In summary, CCKT wishes to stress that it's in the best interests of the future of the Golden Horseshoe for this government to take a hard-line position, to make the tough choices that will allow us to manage our growth to a reasonable level, to ensure that development does not continue to eat up our remaining farmland and open spaces, and to ensure that our environment and natural resources are protected for generations to come.

On behalf of the citizens of King township, who greatly value the remaining countryside, we much appreciate the opportunity to speak before the committee today.

The Chair: Thank you for your delegation. You left yourself with 17 seconds. We appreciate your time.

1050

MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE

The Chair: Our next delegation will be the Markham Environmental Alliance. Welcome.

Mr. John O’Gorman: Good morning. I’m John O’Gorman. I’m from the Markham Environmental Alliance.

The Chair: Welcome. You have 15 minutes. If you don’t use all of your 15 minutes, everybody will be able to ask you questions.

Mr. O’Gorman: I’d like to thank the government for bringing forward the bill. I’d like to ask that it is passed as quickly as possible, even if there are flaws and shortcomings, because it will protect the agricultural lands. You do want to preserve agricultural land as a continuing commercial resource of food and employment. But the agricultural land itself is nothing without the farmer. From the days of the Greater Toronto Services Board, when we were looking at the countryside strategy, the line came out that “If you look after the farmers, the farmers will look after the land.” Agricultural land is not just a natural resource; it is also a social resource. It is the source of our food.

Society has totally changed so that we are mostly from the urban area and are not in contact with our food. It can come from Chile or Peru or China instead of next door. One way to help the farmers help us is to put a face on food, that is, to stop treating food as a commodity and put emphasis on local food. Local food is a food security issue. Food security becomes important when we look at the ease with which the border can be closed these days and the panic that happens when there is a disease. How will we protect our food supply?

One of the things required for farmers to keep farming came from the greater Toronto agricultural economic impact study by Neptis, and that is critical mass. You need the components of the network that supports the farmers: the suppliers, the repair depots, all the things that go into supporting the agricultural industry. There are stories now that the suppliers see the writing on the wall and are moving out of the GTA. And not only that: There are other stories that farmers are taking advantage of the offers of the land speculators, selling out and moving to new farmland.

The land that remains is being rented by the remaining farmers. There we have the conundrum that our society is supporting the land speculators by giving them the decreased tax rate if they rent their land to a farmer and it is being farmed. I’m not quite sure what to do about it, but I do know that rented land is not loved land. It is not necessarily maintained well or improved. The infra-

structure may not be maintained and the repairing and plantings may not be made.

We then come to the point, who would buy the land even if we did free it up? We don't have a supply of new farmers. There is no assistance from OMAF or anyone else to encourage new farmers to take up the job. I know from my work on the Toronto Food Policy Council that there are immigrants who are interested in producing, but they are not going to step out and buy a 100-acre farm. What they will do, though, and what I've seen some of them do, is to work for a year or two on two or three or 10 acres and try their hand at producing. If they succeed there, then they'll expand.

We don't have any source of new farmers. Immigrants are one source. There are the children of farmers, who might want to move on to a farm but don't have the resources. We just don't encourage them.

Infrastructure is another point. Every time you put through roads and sewers, you divide farms, you break up farmland, you reduce that critical mass, and you know that you do, because you call it an economic corridor. The economic corridor, as we've seen over many years along the QEW, the 401 and the 400, ends up in ribbon development. This totally splits agricultural land. Back in the bad old days of putting through railways, they used to accommodate that. If they split a farm, they'd put in bridges, they'd put in underpasses, they'd put in overpasses, so that the farmer could safely get from one side of the farm, past the railroad, to the other. Doing this for a four-lane highway is perhaps not possible—but it's the idea. You know that you're breaking up agricultural land and that critical mass.

Natural features: Again, the greater Toronto area agricultural action plan tells us that almost 20% of the significant environmental features are on farms. The WTO does not allow any more subsidies for crops, but we can pay farmers for environmental services: maintaining the woodlots, streams, rivers and wetlands on their properties. They also have the problem of the destructive activity of the wildlife—raccoons eating corn, deer eating crops. If we can't pay them and subsidize them for the actual product, we could pay them for feeding and supporting the wildlife and not destroying it.

The last thing that I want to get into is the urban shadow. The urban shadow presents a unique advantage to small-scale farmers. If they grow in the urban shadow, they have the special markets of pick-your-own, value-added, local foods, the CSA—community-shared agriculture—because they can deliver to the urban population. But again, the idea of having 100 acres fully in vegetables is awfully heavy work. A person might want to work on five or 10 acres, which brought me to the idea of an agricultural condominium. We have condominiums for housing and for offices and for manufacturing; why not have agricultural condominiums, where three, four or six farmers would share property and keep the land in production?

On that point, I'm running out of juice, and also ideas. Thank you.

1100

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. O'Gorman. We have almost 45 seconds for each party, so I'm going to start with Ms. Churley.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much for your presentation. There's no time to ask a question and get an answer in 45 seconds. May I just say, though, that you raised some very good ideas. I'm particularly concerned about some of the things you raised around the highways and the infrastructure, the aggregate extraction and all kinds of things that the proposed legislation is allowing. I'm also glad that you pointed out that farmers need support to stay viable, which we need to talk more about, because it's not part of this plan.

So thank you very much for raising these very important points. I will be making amendments to the government's plan to try to deal with some of those.

Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham): John, it's good to see you here. You and I have worked on a number of projects and initiatives in Markham. I want to ask you a very quick question, and that is on viability as well, because this has been raised by a number of groups and individuals. Do you think that issue could be satisfactorily addressed within the context of land prices and others?

Mr. O'Gorman: The viability of farmers?

Mr. Wong: Yes.

Mr. O'Gorman: It must be. If you don't keep the farmers using the land, it is going to get turned into non-farm use. John Barber had great fun with the idea this morning in his column. We must support the viability of farming. The OFA has been eloquent on their difficulties. I'm sorry that they reached the conclusion that their only option is to sell to speculators.

The Chair: Mr. O'Gorman, I'm going to have to go to the next party.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you, Mr. O'Gorman, for your presentation and the very important points for this panel to consider. I know my colleague Mr. Wong has made some positive comments about agricultural support in the past. In fact, he said to the Markham Economist and Sun that he believes that we need to answer farmers' complaints with environmental payments or Quebec-style price subsidies, support which I think most farmers here will appreciate. Therefore, Chair, I'd like to put a motion on the floor that reads as follows:

I move that the government table an agriculture support strategy acceptable to Ontario farmers prior to bringing the greenbelt bill to the Legislature for a final vote, to ensure farming in the greenbelt remains a viable way of life, and that the agriculture support strategy takes into consideration the recommendations of Tony Wong, MPP for Markham, that "the province might have to answer farmers' complaints with environmental payments or Quebec-style price subsidies."

Chair, I'll give a copy of the motion to the clerk for distribution.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hudak. Your time has expired, so maybe we can discuss this once we've had a

chance to get a copy to all the members. Would that be acceptable?

Mr. Hudak: We could supply copies to the members, Chair. In light of Mr. Wong's comments and that the York Federation of Agriculture is our next deputation, I'd appreciate Mr. Wong's comments on my motion and perhaps we could have a vote on that motion to table that kind of agriculture support plan in the Leg. before this bill is voted upon.

Mr. Wong: On a point of privilege, Madam Chair: I'm on record opposed to compensation to farmers on the basis of land prices because I do not feel we should compensate them on speculative values, but I did indicate that the government should consider other forms of support.

The Chair: Any further discussion?

Mr. Hudak: I appreciate Mr. Wong's point. We do have him quoted in the Markham Economist and Sun from November 11, 2004, where he said, "The province might have to answer farmers' complaints with environmental payments or Quebec-style price subsidies." I hope Mr. Wong will stick with that opinion.

All I'm asking for in the motion is that this committee call upon an agriculture support plan to be tabled in the Legislature before the government calls this bill for third reading. It was in the commission suggestions, and we've heard over and over again from environmental groups, farmers and municipalities that there should be a farm support plan hand in hand with this legislation. I would like the committee's support for that, and hopefully Mr. Wong's support for this motion.

Mr. Wong: In response to that, I think what I meant, even within the language that was quoted when I indicated that the government might have to answer to, that means to deal with and not necessarily meaning to act in accordance with.

Interjections.

The Chair: Hold on a second. I'm going to go to Mr. Klees.

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I just want to reiterate the point that Mr. Hudak made and support the motion. I'm disappointed that Mr. Wong is backsliding on this principle because I believe no one is expecting that farmers—and I don't believe there's a farmer, certainly not that I've spoken to, who expects to be compensated at development prices. The issue here is, if this government is going to force farmers to stay on their land and not be able to make a profit by selling it, they should at least have in place an agricultural policy that makes it possible for farmers to make a living by farming. That's the issue here, and I would expect this committee to take the opportunity to send that very strong message to the government by passing this amendment, ensuring that, before we overlay this greenbelt legislation, we take into consideration the implications of this proposed legislation. Let's ensure that before we take this step, we protect property owners, we protect the rights of farmers in this province and we then get on with the issue of land use.

The Chair: Can I just—

Interjections.

The Chair: I will recognize people. Please let me get the facts straight as to the motion. I believe it's going to say, "I move that the committee ask the government," is that right, Mr. Hudak?

Mr. Hudak: Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: At the beginning of the motion. Ms. Churley, you're recognized.

Ms. Churley: I object to this process. I just received this. I fully support the notion of bringing in programs to assist farmers. I've said that time and time again and I will continue to fight for that. But to get a motion placed before me like this, to have a debate now when people are waiting to speak to us, I think is unfair. I can't support this or not support it at this point because I don't know a lot about the Quebec program. I need more information. I need to know what it is I'm voting on. It's unfair to ask me to do that on short notice without information.

So I would suggest, so I have more time to look at the ramifications and implications, that we get on with hearing from our deputants and we deal with this at the end of the day when we've finished hearing from people.

The Chair: So are you requesting deferral?

Ms. Churley: I am requesting deferral.

The Chair: I believe a deferral is non-debatable, so we could vote on the deferral before we go back to the motion.

Interjection.

The Chair: All right. I'll go through the list of the speakers and then we'll get to the end and you can vote appropriately. I believe Ms. Van Bommel is next.

Mrs. Van Bommel: As a farmer, the issue of viability is very close to me and it's very important to me. But the motion here isolates and concentrates and focuses on farmers in the greenbelt. Viability is an issue for every farmer in this province, for every farmer in this country. To set aside a group and say that their issues are more important than the rest of the farmers, I have real difficulty with.

1110

The Premier has put together a round table of agriculture and he has asked them to address these issues. I think that the viability issue for agriculture is distinct from the greenbelt. I've watched and listened as the members across the way have practised their political farming. I'm telling you, that dog is not going to hunt. You're not going to concentrate and focus on one group. Your government did nothing for the farmers during the Oak Ridges moraine debate. To suddenly come forward and use this opportunity for your political gain is totally inappropriate. The farmers in this province are in real difficulty, and we're working with the minister to do that. Like I said, it's an issue that is distinct from the greenbelt and it needs to be dealt with.

Interjection.

The Chair: Excuse me. Can we allow the speaker to finish her comments? You weren't interrupted.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you, Chair. That's it.

The Chair: Are there any other speakers? I know Mr. Hudak wants to amend the motion again. What are the amendments before I go to the rest of my list?

Mr. Hudak: In light of my colleague from Toronto-Danforth's comments, I'd like to amend the motion to read as follows: "That the committee ask the government to table an agriculture support strategy acceptable to Ontario farmers prior to bringing the greenbelt bill to the Legislature for a final vote, to ensure farming in the greenbelt remains a viable way of life"—period, end of motion.

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): Flip-flop and delay.

The Chair: Excuse me. Please stop interrupting.

Mr. Duguid: I'm sorry. I was thinking out loud.

The Chair: I understand. So the last words would be "viable way of life" at the end of your motion.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you, Chair. We'll take out the issue of Quebec-style price subsidies that the member had brought up.

The Chair: All right. Mr. Wong, you're my next speaker.

Mr. Wong: I'm really flattered that my colleague Mr. Hudak used my name for his motion, but he got it wrong. If you read my comments carefully, Mr. Mike Adler actually was substantially correct; that's what I said. But again I repeat myself by saying that I indicated that the province might have to answer these complaints. I did not indicate that it should be added in accordance with their request. As a lawyer by profession, I know exactly what I said, and I stand by those comments.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I don't think we're here to discuss any government subsidies toward the farming community at the present time. But let me tell you, when we talk about the Quebec-style price subsidies, we have to do some research. I'm at the Quebec border, and a lot of farmers from Quebec are buying in Ontario because they have to pay less for their equipment. Apparently, the subsidies they're getting are incorporated in the purchasing of supplies and machinery. Before we come down with subsidies, we have to do an in-depth research of the implications for purchasing equipment to the farmers of Ontario.

The Chair: I remind the speakers that you are only speaking to the motion.

Mr. Klees: I would like to speak to the motion. I believe the amendment that Mr. Hudak has put forward does address Ms. Churley's concerns. It focuses the amendment in on the issue, that is, that the legislation before us will do serious harm to farmers who are caught in this legislation.

What we're attempting to address here is simply a matter of timing; that is, rather than proceed with this legislation, that the government gets it right and that we give the government an opportunity to bring forward an appropriate strategy to protect farmers and the economic viability of farms before we encroach on their property

rights through this legislation. I think there's an urgency here.

Ms. Churley: I don't want to get caught up in the middle of this—what would we call it?—fight between the Liberals and Tories. My suggestion that we put this off out of respect for the people waiting to talk to us—that dog's not going to hunt either, it appears.

So let me say that I'm not supporting this motion, and I'm not supporting it even with the amendment, for two reasons. First, I have not had a chance to look at the overall implications of what's been asked for here. Second, as I've said before and will say clearly again, although I have grave problems with the legislation before us in terms of what has been left out and a number of other pieces that have not been dealt with within the context of this legislation beyond supports for farms—the Places to Grow Act, the watershed source protection planning act, the rural plan, the Strong Communities Act, the provincial policy statement reform, the OMB reform. There are a whole lot of pieces that I'm disappointed we're not able to deal with holistically.

Having said all of that, I am not willing to attempt to hold this very important legislation up. What I intend to do is put forward my amendments to improve this legislation, because we do need support for farmers and we do need to look at all the critical pieces that have been left out of what's in the greenbelt. I'm hoping very much and planning on fighting very hard to get those amendments accepted. But I believe it's really dangerous for those of us who support the need for a greenbelt to put forward motions to hold it up, because I believe the pressures out there to in fact not make it stronger, which is my object here, make it weaker.

I don't want to get caught up in this crossfire. I want us to move on and hear from people so the government can hear what they have to say and we can put forward appropriate amendments to fight for those things in the legislation and in the Legislature itself.

The Chair: Mr. Yakabuski.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I'm concerned about the comments on the other side about this motion being political. What we're trying to do here is protect farmers where their concerns and interests have been ignored by this legislation.

Politicking is what this bill is all about. This bill could be called P4: "Polling before planning; politics before protection." That's what this bill is all about. It's all about politics, not about science, not about protection. We're trying to ensure that as this process goes on, for some of the key components being affected, one being farmers, there's some redress as part of this legislation, not, "We'll see what we can do down the road if you're decimated or affected so negatively." I think it has to be part of this process, not part of some rethinking down the road. This motion of Mr. Hudak is designed to address that.

The Chair: Ms. Matthews.

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): I would like to say that I am very embarrassed to be here

as a member of this committee having this political fight when there are people waiting to present. I'm here to listen to what the deputants have to say.

Applause.

The Chair: Please. The audience is not to be involved clapping, or I'll clear the room.

Ms. Matthews: This clearly is another Tory tactic to delay the passage of this very important legislation. I'm embarrassed, I'm ashamed, and I say let's call the vote now.

The Chair: Mr. Duguid.

Mr. Duguid: I completely agree with those comments, but I will make one final comment. I will be encouraging all members of the committee on all sides to vote against this motion. There was certainly plenty of time for the members who moved the motion to try to address the viability of farming during their eight years in government. They did nothing.

This is not a new issue. It didn't start 12 months ago. It's something we're trying to come to terms with and will deal with.

A back-of-the-envelope motion is not the way to deal with that issue. I think it's time now to recognize what's going on here. It's a delay tactic. Prior to Christmas, Mr. Hudak and Mr. Tory were in support of this legislation. Following the Christmas break, obviously things have changed. They've flip-flopped and now they're doing everything they can to water down the greenbelt, everything they can to try to prevent this legislation from coming forward on a timely basis. This side recognizes what they're trying to do and will have none of it.

The Chair: Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): I just want to clarify the point that I think has been made by the introduction of this motion. The previous speaker referred to the fact that he sees this bill as an opportunity to deal with the issue. That is exactly the intent of the motion. We have seen, through the public hearing process, the consistency of the issue raised, and this motion simply asks that the government provide some kind of demonstration of their commitment to providing a viable way of life. That's the intent. Quite frankly, when the previous speaker talked about dealing with the issue, that's what we're looking for.

1120

The Chair: Mr. Hudak.

Mr. Hudak: I'm not going to belabour this issue. I think the motion as it stands, the amendment on the floor, is very simple. We are simply looking for the members of the government side to put their money where their mouth is. Over and over again, the minister has promised an agricultural support plan, but my goodness, he has deserted the field. It has been over a year and he has not come through. All we are asking for through this motion is for the government to make good on its word and bring forward an agricultural viability plan before they call this for a third-reading vote.

Mr. Wong introduced the topic. He brought it up moments ago. I'm just asking him to put his money

where his mouth is, to vote in favour of an agricultural support plan for farmers. I'm disappointed in Mr. Duguid's comments. His acquaintance with the truth is a passing acquaintance at best, I think. He knows very clearly that we voted against the greenbelt legislation at second reading because it has become a greenbotch scheme. We've heard over and over again about the lack of science behind this bill. In Caledon alone, 69 problems have been identified by the municipality.

The Chair: Mr. Hudak, could I ask you to speak just to the motion, please? We do have people waiting. I'd like you to speak just to why you support the motion, please.

Mr. Hudak: Fair enough. Their own task force report, Toward a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt, submitted to the government, which they say they are following through on, calls for a farm viability plan. They said:

"The task force hopes this team will address the concern that:

"Protection of the land alone does not ensure agricultural viability, and the province should pursue complementary initiatives including economic development, research and monitoring, promotion of agricultural easements, and land trusts for farmers who participate in conservation activities and use best practices and management."

You're ignoring the advice of your own committee that you appointed. Please support the motion. Please say you'll do something for farmers before you call this bill for third reading.

The Chair: I think the vote has been called. The only person left who hasn't spoken is Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): I support my colleague's call to vote. There's no question about viability for the farmers. I hear from them every day, and I've said this over and over again. I think what we're doing here today with the greenbelt is establishing the first step. We are protecting farmland. What part don't we understand? We are protecting farmland in the greenbelt. Yes, we have to address the viability issue, and not just within the greenbelt, but we are starting. This bill speaks—you're trying to do it through the back door. Put your money where your mouth is. What happened during the Oak Ridges moraine? What did you do to those farmers in my riding that you imposed the Oak Ridges moraine on, or have we forgotten all about that? That was only three years ago, Mr. Hudak. We are protecting farmland. This is a first step. We are. We're going to vote against your resolution and carry on.

The Chair: Mr. Hudak has moved "that the committee ask the government to table an agriculture support strategy acceptable to Ontario farmers prior to bringing the greenbelt bill to the Legislature for a final vote, to ensure farming in the greenbelt remains a viable way of life."

Mr. Hudak: Recorded vote, Chair.

The Chair: A recorded vote has been requested.

Ayes

Hudak, Yakabuski.

Nays

Churley, Duguid, Lalonde, Matthews, Rinaldi, Van Bommel.

The Chair: That vote has failed.

YORK FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

The Chair: Our next delegation is the York Federation of Agriculture. Please come forward. Thank you for coming. For the purposes of Hansard, could you identify yourself and the organization you speak for. You are entitled to 15 minutes to speak. Should you use all of your time, there won't be time for questions, but should you not, I'll ensure that everybody gets a chance to speak to you.

Dr. Terry O'Connor: My name is Terry O'Connor. I am the president of the Federation of Agriculture in the region of York. We are affiliated with the largest farm organization in Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, which you heard from yesterday. In York region, we have just under 800 members in the business of food production.

I would first like to thank the committee for the opportunity of bringing the concerns of York agriculture regarding the implementation of Bill 135.

In retrospect, the GTA is haunted by the failure of the Darcy McKeough Toronto-centred region plan, which wasn't accepted back in 1971. If we had been able to move that plan together, it would have predated a lot of the issues we're addressing today, and now we've been clamouring to control sprawl ever since. Even now, as some of the other speakers have mentioned, why haven't we seen the Caplan report, Places to Grow, prior to the bringing forth of the greenbelt legislation?

As indicated in the 1999 and 2004 impact studies, agriculture in York is still a major contributor to the regional economy in spite of urban sprawl. As well, farming contributes substantially in protecting the environment and water supply. Protecting green space is an admirable goal but should not be achieved, as you've heard today, on the backs of a small minority of constituents.

I would like to address three areas of food production where Bill 135 will have a significant effect.

Certainly in equity: I expect you will hear many times over these four days of meetings that you can't protect farmland without protecting the food producer. Farmers in York region are frightened by the prospect of tremendous loss of equity, probably more than anywhere else in the GTA. Equity in land provides farmers with three things: possible retirement funding, the ability to transfer assets to the next generation, or borrowing for capital and operating costs.

As an example, one of our members, Jamie Huntley, has operated a productive farm in Sutton for almost 60 years. Now, he has no next generation to continue farming and no buyers for his property since the greenbelt was announced. As well, he is burdened—and this is an issue most people don't realize—with a residence that is entwined with his farming operation and is unable to separate the house and live out his retirement.

Long-term viability: Last summer, the agriculture task force that we lobbied for was not given a direction to study the options to ensure the long-term viability of farming in the context of the greenbelt legislation and certainly in the context of agriculture in Ontario, as member Van Bommel mentioned this morning. It's certainly a problem right across the province, and you'll hear quite a bit about it this afternoon. Two or three of the people who are speaking are friends of mine, and they're going to talk about the disaster in the corn and oilseed situation as we know it right now.

Every study and recommendation on viability that I have seen ignores the viability issue and leaves us without any concrete recommendations to examine and review. North America has a cheap food policy. Here in Ontario we compete not only in the global market but also regionally. Due to the policies in places like the United States and Quebec, the burden of a cheap food policy in Canada is disproportionately borne by the primary producers.

It's an embarrassment to me, as a farmer who has been in the industry for over 50 years, to see this information come out from Pickseed's Forage Informer. They did an interview with an operator in Shawville, Quebec, and this is an excerpt: "Farming in la belle province has advantages, although Cyrus, who is the owner of the farm, told me a couple of times that 'You don't need to write that.' I do want to comment on the favourable position that the Quebec government has taken toward their farmers. Quebec not only recognizes the key importance of farmers to food production but also has in place funding programs that actually encourage farming—something that the Ontario government could learn from."

Next week, February 10, is approximately Food Freedom Day in Canada, where the average Canadian has spent 10% of their disposable income on food for 2005. This includes groceries and restaurant meals, even Tim Hortons. This is the smallest amount in the world. Why do the primary producers get only 11 cents from a loaf of bread that costs \$2.89, or six cents from a box of Oatmeal Crunch cereal that costs \$4.69? It just isn't right. It's been reported that athletes—Wayne Gretzky makes more from a box of cereal that he endorses than the primary producer.

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We in agriculture are not supported either federally or provincially. We are not high on the radar screen when compared with such hot-button issues as health care and education. Every time there's an issue around health care, we respond differently than we would for something as important as agriculture.

Provincially, we have seen the devastation of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food with ongoing cutbacks. In York region, we've lost our last remaining personal contact with the OMAF staff and see the effects of the cutbacks to program after program. One of them has been the tile drain issue. This is an unfortunate attitude to take in view of the long-term ramifications. In other North American jurisdictions and throughout the world, we see that the state shows respect for the food production industry and places a premium on the security of their own food source.

In the last few years, farming is under increased financial burden with new regulations such as nutrient management, source water protection, and now in York region we're addressing a new tree-cutting bylaw, a by-law that has no consideration for the long-time experience and judicious use that farmers have carried out in their woodlots. With all the environmental programs in place, maybe we could suggest one called source protection for food.

Liability and public use: Under the trespass act, farmers really live in fear of the possibility of liability when there is an increase in the perceived public ownership of lands or connecting areas. Hansard reported when the greenbelt was first announced that there would be great emphasis placed on recreation. That scares farmers. It's much like farming in the park. As everyone knows, we live in a litigious society and there have been some terrible issues around problems with people running on your land.

In the countryside where I live, farming is only considered important as a protection of the rural landscape. They move out into our area and then complain about agriculture. It's very typical. Everyone wants a piece of land. They are opposed to sprawl but will not accept densification, so they move to the area where we are conducting the business of food production. I have had the experience of a horn blast and snide remarks when I've been out on the road.

So where do we go from here? To preserve food production, we need understanding from the federal and, more importantly, the provincial governments. We need concrete development with a light at the end of the tunnel to keep farmers on the land. We must address viability if society wants food production to be part of the rural landscape.

We should develop partnerships to legitimize public funding. We need a high level of private sector involvement and investment. We need something akin to a rural development commission, with economically and politically powerful partners. We have to get all of society to understand and support the needs of agriculture if the greenbelt is to succeed. We must work together to find the balance of environmental needs with food production and other agricultural needs, and a recognition of the value of food production as it fits into the important requirement for us to protect the environment and the rural landscape. Agriculture is the one renewable raw resource that this country was built on. My great-great-

great-grandfather came in 1830 to settle out in the Ajax area and I have nephews still on the farm. So it's been a wonderful resource for this country and it really built this country. Lose agriculture and there will be many issues around the protection of human health and the environment.

How can we arrive at suitable compensation with society as a partner? There are examples in the US, Europe and British Columbia where the government has set aside land to remain in agriculture with a suitable compensation package to keep the land productive. I would leave that challenge to the government's policy advisers. I was pleased to see the presentation yesterday of Neil Currie on the issue in the States, where they promoted the land—the land was owned and supported by the government.

I would caution the policymakers about the issue when they're looking at BC. I have a letter here to the editor of Small Farm Canada and I would just read one paragraph:

"It would behoove Ontarians to take a good look at the failings of the BC system, where, because of cabinet bungling, our 'reserve' has simply become nothing more than a system of open or green space preservation, an urban containment boundary, paid for solely by the diminished farm population of the province."

So they need to step back and take a hard look, as you heard this morning, and create an advisory committee to investigate a solid framework and realistic methods for achieving greenbelt goals, as well as long-term, sustainable agricultural goals. Rushing to push through Bill 135 without having this framework in place and without including the valuable contribution from the food production industry will lead to chaos and failure to achieve the very noble goals set forth.

The greenbelt designation must be delayed until the viability of primary food production has been assessed. We need the implementation of a clearly defined road map with a just and adequate compensation program.

I read an article in the Financial Post, dated Wednesday, April 21, 2004, which said:

"For the first time in memory, possibly for the first time in Canadian history, a prominent government panel is recommending that unsustainable rural areas in Canada's heartland be taken off life support and allowed to die a natural death...."

"A major Ontario government report, produced by its panel on the role of government and praised by Ontario's Premier, dismissed the notion that the rural economy is a bedrock. The panel concluded that much of rural Canada is economically unsustainable, that it is futile to try to artificially sustain rural industry, that population decline is inevitable, and that the government should abandon regional development programs."

I hope that doesn't include agriculture.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. O'Connor. We have a minute for each party, beginning with the government side.

Mrs. Van Bommel: I want to thank Dr. O'Connor and the York federation for a very well-thought-out

presentation. Your last comments about the Panel on the Role of Government in Ontario—that panel was put together by the previous government, and I'd like to assure you that our government does not support that. We feel that there is life to be had in rural Ontario, and we need to support not just the rural economy, but the agricultural economy. So I congratulate you and encourage you.

One of the questions I do have for you is, how do we help young farmers stay on our farms? That's a real issue for all of us in agriculture.

Dr. O'Connor: Viability is number one. There is only one issue involved in keeping your sons and daughters on the farm, and it's viability. As you know, there is just no viability in agriculture this year. BSE and the grains and oilseeds are just tremendous difficulties this year.

Mr. Klees: Dr. O'Connor, thank you for your presentation. In your closing statement you make the comment that "the greenbelt designation must be delayed until viability of primary food production has been assessed." That was the essence of an amendment that was put forward just recently and voted down by every member of the government.

I want to ask you this question: Given the greenbelt legislation and the impact that it has already had on the value of farmland caught within the greenbelt, when it comes time for farmers to renew their mortgages, can you tell this panel what you anticipate will happen?

The Chair: You have 26 seconds to answer that.

Dr. O'Connor: Well, it's very difficult. I would ask you to listen to some of the speakers this afternoon. One of them, I think, will be speaking directly about that. He's got a large operation. We have some of the biggest what we call grain and oilseed farmers in Ontario in the York region.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Dr. O'Connor. You can't answer the question because the question was too long.

Ms. Churley: Thank you, Dr. O'Connor. This may seem a little far-fetched, but I want to make an analogy here. Even though I represent a downtown riding in Toronto, I hail from Newfoundland, and I watched the fish disappear and young people leave, and it's all over the news these days about the flag flap. I don't want to see that happen in rural and agricultural communities. What you and many are describing goes well beyond what's going on with the greenbelt.

I'm a supporter of the greenbelt. I want to improve it and make it better, because right now I believe there are political boundaries involved. But I just wanted to let you know that I think what you're saying—I don't support you on delaying this, but I support everything else you're saying around making farms viable and working with the other levels of government to make that happen on an urgent matter because of BSE and low commodity prices and all kinds of other things that are happening. You're absolutely right on.

Dr. O'Connor: The world is covered with the carcasses of programs that didn't work.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Dr. O'Connor, you don't have time left. I'm trying to keep us to schedule. Thank you very much for your delegation.

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BOND HEAD BRADFORD
WEST GWILLIMBURY RESIDENTS
FOR RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

The Chair: Our next group is Bond Head Bradford West Gwillimbury Residents for Responsible Development. Please come forward.

Mr. Klees: Chair, while the presenter is coming forward, if I could just ask your consideration. In the past when I have attended meetings, presenters have at least been given the opportunity to complete their sentences and wrap up. I really would ask you as Chair to give that kind of consideration.

The Chair: I hear you, but I was accused yesterday of not being fair and not allowing everybody sufficient time. I have a responsibility to ensure that these public hearings run on time. We are already half an hour behind. With respect, we have a lot of people who have taken time out of their day to be here and we need to run on schedule. So my advice to members of this committee is to keep your questions short. They shouldn't be an opportunity for you to make a speech prior to the question.

Good morning, gentlemen. I'm sorry that you've been held up this morning. Please introduce yourselves for Hansard and identify the group that you're speaking for. You'll have 15 minutes when you do start.

Mr. Phil Trow: Honourable MPPs and Madam Chair of the legislative standing committee, I am pleased to be here today, along with Robert Keffer, to share our input with your committee on the proposed greenbelt legislation. My name is Phil Trow. I am the chair of the Bond Head/BWG Residents for Responsible Development, a group that is focused on protecting the rural and agricultural character of our community in south Simcoe county.

The town of Bradford West Gwillimbury is located only a few kilometres north of the Oak Ridges moraine, but outside the proposed greenbelt boundary. Our small hamlet of Bond Head is located on some of the best non-tender fruit land in Ontario, as will be discussed by Robert in the second part of our presentation.

While we applaud the government's efforts to preserve a greenbelt around the GTA, as it stands, the proposal has left the communities and farmland in south Simcoe vulnerable to large-scale leapfrog development and urban sprawl. This is the community where I live amongst neighbours, many of whom are multi-generation farmers.

In May 2004, Neptis Foundation released a report titled Simcoe County: The New Growth Frontier. This report identifies the factors driving development north of the Oak Ridges moraine, the reasons why developers are proposing such large-scale developments on greenfield sites, and what these proposals mean for Simcoe county and the province. According to Neptis, "Simcoe county is

an important test case for the region and the province as a whole. If the smart growth policies promoted by the province fail to be implemented here, it will signal that the existing planning regime is unable to meet the challenges posed by rapid growth." Clearly, Neptis has identified south Simcoe as the region most threatened by future growth.

The government's greenbelt proposal and commitment to smart growth haven't changed the attitude of developers. Since the greenbelt's proposal, we have seen accelerated interest by developers in securing farm properties in our community and in south Simcoe. Developers are following the path of least resistance by leapfrogging the greenbelt study area.

In my town, a developer has submitted a proposal to amend the official plan to clear the way for a massive development on prime agricultural land. This development would increase the population of the hamlet of Bond Head from a few hundred people to 70,000 people over the next 25 years, subsequently increasing Bradford West Gwillimbury's population of 24,000 to 120,000. This is a greenfield proposal that falls outside of our town's development boundary and it contradicts the guiding principles of our community's official plan. The developer's proposal encompasses 6,200 acres, of which 78.4% is prime agricultural land.

My town is not alone in facing severe development pressure. In fact, lands just a few kilometres away from us are also facing massive development proposals. These include a development at Thornton for 50,000 people and several development proposals in New Tecumseth.

Bradford West Gwillimbury is the first municipality north of the greenbelt boundary along the Highway 400 corridor. We congratulate the government for expanding the greenbelt study area to include the missing half of the Holland Marsh, which lies within Simcoe county, but they should have included further expansion into the environmental and agricultural areas equal or superior to the Holland Marsh. We consider our prime agricultural land as a jewel in the agricultural communities of Ontario.

At this point I'd like to introduce Robert Keffer, a seventh-generation farmer.

Mr. Robert Keffer: I am a dairy farmer. I live in an agricultural community. My family owns 325 acres located approximately two miles south of Bond Head and three miles north of Highway 9, the northern boundary of the proposed greenbelt.

The Holland Marsh is three miles from my property. Within a three-mile radius, the milk truck can pick up milk from 10 dairy farms. Within this three-mile radius there are also a major farm equipment dealership; two grain elevator operations; three fabricating and welding businesses; three seed cleaning dealerships; four seed corn dealerships; 10 trucking businesses that transport our farmers' grain, livestock or milk; a cheese factory; a chicken processing plant; and a marshalling yard for Gencor Foods.

Within a 10-mile radius we also have Ontario's largest cattle auction and stockyards; two additional grain elevator operations; three fertilizer plants; four abattoirs; four feed dealerships; and three communities that host spring or fall agricultural fairs.

If this is not a vibrant farm community, what is? Show me another agricultural community in Ontario with as great a concentration of agricultural infrastructure. For over 50 years, progressive farmers from the York region have purchased farms in my community, and this trend still continues today, with six farmers purchasing land over the past six years. The question is, why did these farmers purchase farms in Bond Head? These are discriminating buyers who have had the opportunity to check out the best land in all of Ontario, and they chose the Bond Head area. These farms were purchased from farmers who were retiring. I cannot think of a farmer from my community who has sold and relocated his farm operation to another part of Ontario, looking for greener pastures.

We have the consistent microclimate and soil conditions to generate excellent yields on our prime agricultural land. This means that I can be on the land earlier in the spring. My wife grew up on a farm 12 miles from Bond Head, and after marrying me she commented, "Where are the stones to pick?" This shows that our pocket of land is special. Of note, the six-year average yield for corn, soybeans and winter wheat from 1998 to 2003 is higher in Simcoe county versus York, Halton or Peel. Agriculture is also healthy for our environment; crops remove carbon dioxide from the air.

What does this have to do with the Greenbelt Act? We are presently zoned agriculture in our official plan, but despite this designation we are still being inundated by speculators. The current system is not working. We need help. Speculators are scrambling to take control of this prime agricultural land. Since the middle of January, my family has been contacted by five different people wanting to purchase my land for the purpose of development. We tell them we are not interested in selling; we need our land for our farm business. Neighbouring landowners have also been approached with offers. It is not a healthy situation for the agriculture industry to have developers trying to tie up land for possible future development. Haven't these developers heard the comments from the Honourable John Gerretsen saying he is going to preserve prime agricultural land? Why are they pursuing the purchase of lands within weeks of the greenbelt standing committee hearings? We need protection.

A 1999 study on the economic impact of the agriculture industry in Simcoe county showed that it directly employed 4,770 people and over 14,000 jobs were tied to agriculture. Sales locally, nationally and internationally totalled \$265 million per year, and the agricultural community spent \$235 million per year locally on goods and services.

Farmers do not require municipal water services, municipal sewage treatment plants or new county, provincial or municipal roads. Most farmers do not clog the roads

with traffic in rush hour, as many are able to walk to work. Farmers are community-minded people who keep local communities strong.

The agriculture industry in my community is a vibrant, self-sustaining economic entity that is a critical component of this province's overall well-being. Because this and other Ontario farming communities function so well as an industry, their importance is all too often taken for granted.

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The past few years have been very challenging for farmers. Farmers in Ontario need a farm plan to make farming more viable, but the first step is to protect prime agricultural lands by preventing development on them, like other jurisdictions have implemented around the world. Opening the door to leapfrog development on prime agricultural land is not the answer. We must protect this finite resource. Ontario needs its agriculture industry.

Mr. Trow: The objectives and visions of the Greenbelt Act can only be realized if all the areas within commuting distance of the GTA are included. Otherwise, the act will encourage urban sprawl as developers move farther from the urban centres. Did you know that the Bradford West Gwillimbury official plan allows for a population of 20,000 more people? With increased urban densities, my town could accommodate greater urban density within its boundaries instead of encroaching upon valuable farmland.

Why are you leaving south Simcoe out of the greenbelt? Are you not defeating the goals and visions of the greenbelt initiative? The greenbelt law is a landmark for the Liberal government. Our residents' association strongly urges the Honourable John Gerretsen and Premier Dalton McGuinty to extend the greenbelt boundary to include south Simcoe county. This is the only way to protect the prime agricultural land and the agriculture industry of this area from urban sprawl and to preserve the rural character of our community. The town of Bradford West Gwillimbury and south Simcoe are a test case for this government's Greenbelt Act. This jewel is worth saving, not just for our own community but for all citizens and future generations of Ontario.

Thank you again for this opportunity to share our input with your committee.

The Chair: Thank you, gentlemen. Each party has a minute and a half. Mr. Hudak, would you like to begin?

Mr. Hudak: Thank you, gentlemen, for the presentation. You make an excellent point. We've heard over and over again about why this scheme has been botched from the beginning. There's good, class 1 farmland left wide open for development and rather unviable land that's being protected for some strange reason.

This was not based on science. There is no scientific report to back up these boundaries. There is no research that was done. Minister Gerretsen admitted yesterday where he got the boundaries; in fact, it's a Liberal campaign document. So politicians and political advisers developed those boundaries, and as a result, prime

agricultural land is wide open for development. You wonder why the minister has keyed on stopping development around Beaverton but left wide open sprawl up to Barrie and through your municipality.

One of the ways that we think we can remedy this mistake is to have some sort of appeal tribunal that would allow properties to be brought in and brought out, dependent on good science. Would you support that kind of appeal mechanism to help protect areas like your own?

The Chair: You have 24 seconds to answer that question.

Mr. Trow: We feel the science supports us to be in the greenbelt. We ask you, Tim, do you support south Simcoe being in the greenbelt?

Mr. Hudak: Listen, if the committee gives me time—

Mr. Trow: Did you answer yes?

The Chair: You have 10 seconds to answer the question.

Mr. Hudak: If the committee gives me extended time to respond—

The Chair: No.

Mr. Hudak: It should be based on science, and if the science demonstrates that Bond Head has good environmental land—

Mr. Trow: Did you say yes to us, is my question?

Mr. Hudak: —then you're darned right. Good agricultural land should be protected and non-viable land should not be protected.

The Chair: Ms. Churley, you are the next speaker: a minute and a half.

Ms. Churley: I do support the Simcoe area being in the greenbelt and will be putting forward amendments on that. I thank you for your submission. It reflects most of my position.

Applause.

The Chair: Could the audience please refrain from clapping or anything else, or I'll have to remove you.

Ms. Churley: Let me say this: Scientific consensus actually says that the greenbelt should be larger, because I agree that there's some political fiddling with the boundaries. At this point, I think we all agree with that. But the good news is, there is scientific consensus that says there's going to be leapfrog development and that tells us we have to increase the size of it, including south Simcoe. I doubt if there is any time to respond to that, but I think you asked the Tories a good question on that: Do they support putting all of those lands that have been left out? Hopefully, the Liberals as well would answer that question: Would they support putting Simcoe and some of the other lands you mentioned in the greenbelt to make it truly viable?

The Chair: You have 30 seconds if you want to respond.

Mr. Trow: We thank you for that support. It's a great encouragement to hear part of our government supporting local people and communities.

Ms. Churley: I'll fight for that, don't worry.

The Chair: To the government side.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you for this presentation. When you talk about developers and their coming into our rural communities and trying to buy our land, it is certainly a concern. At this time, we have a bill in the Planning Act amendment that requires that municipalities “be consistent with,” rather than “have regard to,” the provincial policy statement. That gives us some strength right now to help keep agricultural land in agriculture.

One of the things I’d like to ask you about, though—you mentioned that six farmers have bought six new farms in your community, Mr. Keffer. What has been the impact on land values and the competition between farmers and speculators in trying to buy new farms?

Mr. Keffer: Up until the last two years, when speculators decided that this is a prime area for development, they were basically agricultural land values, in the \$7,000 range or whatever. Farmers didn’t have expectations of higher values for their land two years ago. It’s the uncertainty now and the question of what’s going to happen that’s really bothering the farmers in the area.

Mr. Trow: We could also say it’s perceived-price speculation of value that has caused what the community is dealing with right now. Our farmers—

Mrs. Van Bommel: —have to compete with developers and speculators to buy land.

The Chair: Thank you, gentlemen; your time has expired. We appreciate your being here today.

NATIONAL FARMERS UNION, LOCAL 6

The Chair: The next group appearing before us is the National Farmers Union, Local 6. Please come forward. Good morning and welcome. Please identify yourself and the group you’re speaking for. When you begin, you will have 15 minutes.

Mr. Bill Hasiuk: My name is Bill Hasiuk and I’m speaking for the National Farmers Union. I’ve already learned this morning that when you do a presentation, make it long so you don’t have to take a lot of questions. I didn’t know that.

My name is Bill Hasiuk. I farm on the Oak Ridges moraine north of Bowmanville. Our original farm, the family farm, is located on the Courtice Road north of Courtice. I’m president of the National Farmers Union, Local 6, which comprises the region of Durham and Peterborough and Victoria counties.

I read the Greenbelt Task Force recommendations, and under the heading of “Key Agricultural Lands” it states that “lands within the greenbelt must be able to support the agricultural economy and related activities.” Let me assure you, ladies and gentlemen, unless they are part of a supply management system, the lands cannot support an agricultural economy, and there are little or no related activities in our area.

Cash crop and beef farmers cannot compete in a climate of open borders and high subsidization of US and Quebec farmers. If you were receiving \$30 per diem for being here today and I was receiving \$130, you’d have a tough time staying in the same hotel as me. That is

exactly the difference in support per acre between Ontario corn and Quebec or Michigan corn.

Farms in the Golden Horseshoe are less viable this year than last, and those close to development are even less so due to higher taxes and other restrictions: time of travel from farm to farm, minimum spray distances, odours, noises and other complaints. The so-called related industries are non-existent. If you consider the area between Brampton and Highway 115 south of Highway 7, there are no farm dealerships in the area that I’m aware of except for one out near Orono, and they exist because of lawn and garden supplies and small construction equipment. There are no feed mills in that area that I’m aware of, no one mixing feed for farmers. There’s no need for it. They’ve moved.

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The phrase “certainty of the availability of land” is of little consequence if there is no sustainable means of making a profit.

I have nothing to give this panel that you haven’t heard before. There have been a lot better people up here than I. But I am the average farmer. I’m 59 years old. I have a cow-calf operation, and I cash crop. Last summer, I grew no soybeans and no corn. I grew small grains and hay. I didn’t make a heck of a lot of money, but I didn’t lose any. I’m still paying for 2003’s sins. That’s what we have to remember. I have two grown children. They both attended university and work here in the city. My wife has a full-time job, and if she didn’t, I wouldn’t be here. I’d be gainfully employed. I’m tired of her telling me that she subsidizes me.

Today, it is estimated that 73% of farm income comes from income off the farm.

The greenbelt legislation wants farmers to protect so-called farmland for future generations. Are you folks kidding? There are no future generations. I am the terminal generation, right here. When we’re gone, the only people left will be technicians, at best. The only farmers who can borrow money today have supply management quotas and a cost-of-production scenario.

Mr. Vanclief and Mr. Bedggood made a vain effort to legitimize the protection of green space. I cannot find one single attempt from these two to suggest how we might be sustainable or able to carry the burden of not being able to sell land for what it is worth.

These boys held hearings last summer during haying season. It rained a lot last summer. Haying went on from May to October, and I don’t think they had any good hay. I had two calls. Of course, you can’t leave your work to try to legitimize a farce, and that’s how I looked at it. I did not attend, and many others did not as well.

I must say that my experience with the past federal agriculture minister, Lyle Vanclief, was one where he would pretty much say and do anything he was told to get a paycheck. He has no credibility, and you should take his hearings as that.

The report I read claimed that the greenbelt has significant historical features, such as the Iroquois shoreline. I don’t know where that is. It’s supposed to be

a prehistoric lake, but I have no idea where this prehistoric lake is. I make two assumptions, neither based on fact. The Oak Ridges moraine has a lot of gravel; maybe that was it. In our area, south of Taunton Road was all gravel; maybe that was it. That gravel is all gone. It went to build General Motors in the 1950s.

The municipality of Clarington is using the lakeshore as their designation. I have a map. I don't know if you can see it, but all of the white is the lakeshore. I've never seen a lakeshore like it. It's somewhat irregular, for sure.

I must say that our farm is right on the edge of the development land and the protected area.

My recommendation to the board today is to not restrict farmers from selling their farms, if they so wish, for the highest dollar, unless you provide a supply management system for all commodities not already enrolled or a system of safety nets that will help farmers compete with US and Quebec farmers so they can make a living on a balanced scale.

My personal situation is that my father passed away in 2003, and our farm was offered for sale in 2004. The buyer walked away from the deal as Bill 135 moved forward. Our taxes have doubled in the past year. The municipality tells me that there are environmentally sensitive areas on the farm, and I don't know how they know this, unless they came on the farm trespassing—even frog trails, one planner told me. She said I must not disturb the frogs. I can't cut any fence posts and I can't do any logging. But my taxes have doubled. There are no buildings on that land. Yet I'm told through the greenbelt legislation that I must protect that land for free, without compensation, for some future generation.

My father and my grandmother arrived in Canada in 1917 from Ukraine. Father started farming in 1931. The down payment was money he received from the Ontario compensation board for the loss of all the fingers on his right hand in an industrial accident. Mom and Dad farmed that farm, 150 acres, half of it workable. They always had a good car; they always had a decent truck. They raised three children, and we all worked on the farm every day. They made a living. I can't make a living farming 500 acres. As kids, we all worked there. As an adult, I helped Dad as long as he wanted to farm, and now I work the farm.

Your legislation wants me to protect or sell the farm for one fifth of what it's worth. I have to say to you folks, shame on you for thinking that you have the right to take away our pensions. Shame on you for thinking that you have the right to know what to do with that land better than we who worked on it. And shame on you, again, for disrupting our lives and upsetting us. I don't think that's what you are here for.

If you want to protect these farms, buy them for what they are worth. Don't de-zone them, and don't de-zone their value. In 1917, Dad and baba came here to get away from the expropriation going on in Ukraine by Joseph Stalin. Bill 135 is doing the same thing, only you're using paper instead of guns. Shame on you for having legislation without appeal; that, to me, is communism. To

tell you the truth, my Dad wouldn't believe it. He put the flag up every day and was proud of it.

Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hasiuk. Our first questioner is Ms. Churley. Each party has a minute and a half.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much for your presentation. You said some pretty strong things, particularly when you said that you're the last of the farm generation. You know, we have to preserve farmland. There was a report today in the news that Ontario had more farmland eaten up than any other province in the country; I believe that's what it said. It seems to me that you're saying you support that—we've got to preserve our farmland—but the problem is that we don't have the supports in place to make farming viable.

You've made some suggestions, put forward some suggestions that you want to see in place. You don't want to see farmland paved over, I assume.

Mr. Hasiuk: There are only two ways that a farmer can make money. One is out of the marketplace, and the other is for the government to subsidize him so he's on par with his competition. If the farm is viable, I'm certainly not going to leave the farm. If my child sees that I'm making money, he or she will certainly consider staying home on the farm too or coming back to the farm, because they can pay for it. But the way it is now, you can't.

Ms. Churley: In particular, you mentioned that supply management systems should be expanded to other commodities, commodities like beef, for instance.

Mr. Hasiuk: That's correct.

Ms. Churley: You think that could make a really big difference?

Mr. Hasiuk: If we had a supply management system in beef in place right now, the BSE crisis wouldn't affect us at all.

Ms. Churley: Right. Thank you very much.

The Chair: The government side.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Hasiuk. The concept of cost production for other commodities is something that I've been hearing quite a bit more about from farmers in the last probably two months. I do have the advantage of being in a supply-managed commodity myself, and I certainly understand the strengths of that particular system.

How would we address the issues we have now? Supply management is under fire internationally at this point. How would be able to extend cost of production to other commodities and get ourselves around the issues of the WTO and the GATT?

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Mr. Hasiuk: If you're going to go to a supply management system, it's going to take an awful long time. I think the first thing you have to do is address the Farm Products Marketing Act and give boards some strength to set prices and close borders.

Mrs. Van Bommel: How would we deal with the international implications of that?

Mr. Hasiuk: That's really hard to say. I sponsored a meeting last spring for the beef industry and it's a long row to hoe, but the experts we had at the meeting said it was not necessarily impossible: the ASRA system in Quebec. I don't know if we necessarily need to reinvent the wheel.

The Chair: The official opposition?

Mr. Klees: Thank you, Mr. Hasiuk, for your very straightforward presentation. I do hope that the members of the government sitting at this committee heard your appeal to understand what they are really doing. When the curtain is pulled, this is really expropriation without compensation. It is an absolute vacancy of property rights. One of the things that I believe this forum gives us is at least an opportunity to let people in this province know they do not have property rights, that there are no property rights in the Constitution of this country. Even China has property rights.

This bill has really brought to the forefront an issue that goes far beyond the greenbelt. It goes to a fundamental principle of what kind of society we're building. In this particular case, you're absolutely right. The government, for its own purposes, has failed to keep the balance between property rights and environmental rights. That's the responsibility of a responsible government. Sir, thank you for drawing attention to it. We have a serious challenge to try to bring this government—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Klees. Can you wrap up?

Mr. Klees: —to the point of understanding what they're doing to you and farmers and property owners in this province, be they developers or not.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Klees. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Wong: Madam Chair, on a point of order.

The Chair: What's your point of order?

Mr. Wong: My friend the member for Oak Ridges said that even China has property rights. I hope he did not mean that in a derogatory sense, that he did not mean that China was one of the worst countries in the world.

Mr. Klees: As a communist country, even as a communist country. Yes, I did mean to draw attention to that.

Mr. Wong: Not in a derogatory sense.

Mr. Klees: Grow up, Tony.

The Chair: Gentlemen, please confine your comments to the delegation and the substance of his delegation. Thank you, sir, for coming. I appreciate it.

Our next delegation will be from the township of King. Before we begin with that delegation, could I remind the audience that you are in a public hearing setting. You are not—

Interjections.

The Chair: Committee, could you please call some order? Can I remind the members of the audience that you are not to provide any support or condemnation of any of the comments here today or you will be asked to leave.

Mr. Duguid: On a point of order, Madam Chair: Could I ask that the member for Oak Ridges stop making derogatory remarks to my colleagues?

The Chair: I would ask that all groups show some decorum and some respect for our delegations, please, both sides.

Mr. Duguid: I appreciate that. Thank you.

TOWNSHIP OF KING

The Chair: Good morning. Is it still morning? No, it isn't. Good afternoon. For the purposes of Hansard, could you please identify yourselves, who will be speaking today and the group you represent? When you begin, you will have 15 minutes. Should you use all of your 15 minutes, we will listen intently. If you have time left over, there will be opportunities for questions or comments by the members.

Ms. Margaret Black: I'm Margaret Black, mayor of King township. With me is Stephen Kitchen, our director of planning for the township of King, and Margaret Coburn, a prominent member of Concerned Citizens of King and very active in our politics in King.

On behalf of the township of King, thank you for the opportunity to address the Legislative Assembly regarding Bill 135, the Greenbelt Act.

To provide the members with some context, the township of King is a large, sparsely populated municipality of about 20,000 people, steeped in its rural character, being bisected by Highway 400 and Highway 9 and surrounded by the urban municipalities of Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Newmarket and Aurora. Our limited growth is primarily focused in our three urban villages and, to a lesser degree, in our five hamlets.

Our northern boundary is comprised of the southern half of the Holland Marsh, known as the vegetable basket of Ontario. Our township is also home to numerous equine farms, and equestrian and cattle operations.

Although the township is supportive of the general concepts of a greenbelt in the Golden Horseshoe, there are areas of the draft plan and Bill 135 that require clarification and re-examination. I'd like to touch on three areas: agriculture, leapfrogging, and major highways.

First, agriculture: It is vital that adequate time be given to the province, the rural municipalities and the agricultural communities to study the long-term implications of this legislation prior to its passage.

I am a member of the Ontario Farmland Trust, whose goal is the protection and preservation of farmland across the province, and we have been hearing serious concerns about farm viability. It is important to remember that this could adversely affect lives and livelihoods, as we've heard this morning. These are the stewards of the land you are seeking to protect. We need to address the viability of farming if we are to protect the land. We understand that the greenbelt has substantially increased the value of agricultural lands beyond the greenbelt boundaries.

We support the flexible approach to agriculture in the greenbelt, as opposed to the restrictive approach in the Oak Ridges moraine conservation plan on farming operations. Of particular importance to King township is the

provision of a permanent second residence for farm help within the Oak Ridges moraine plan. As the Oak Ridges moraine conservation plan has already been amended through Bill 27, the Greenbelt Protection Act, we urge you to take the opportunity to harmonize the two documents and allow permanent residences for farm help in the Oak Ridges moraine plan. Second residents are absolutely necessary to our large multi-million dollar farming operations. These are the stewards of the land and a part of our agricultural framework.

Like the previous speakers, my family settled on a farm in King in 1822, and if I had not been female, I would be farming there. I would have liked to have farmed; I wish I had been able to. My parents sent me to law school instead. I can tell you that my preference would have been farming, but even at that time we were concerned about economic viability.

The second issue is leapfrogging. The township of King is very concerned that the greenbelt legislation, in combination with the Oak Ridges moraine conservation plan, will compound—I say “compounding” because it is already happening—the leapfrogging of development beyond the greenbelt, further adding to problems such as lengthy commuting distances and loss of agricultural lands. Leapfrogging has already had a significant detrimental effect on our municipal finances.

Our roads study of 2004 shows that the cost to bring our rural roads up to standard has increased by about 50% since 2001. Much of this is due to the diversion of traffic from Highways 9 and 400 when those highways are congested. During this time our population has increased by only approximately 4%. It is difficult to revitalize our downtown cores and preserve rural culture due to sheer traffic volumes generated from elsewhere.

The traffic has also affected our emergency services costs. Our current fire service is composed of volunteers. Currently, due to call volumes associated with Highways 400 and 9, our volunteer staff is responding at a rate which exceeds most full-time stations. Continued growth in commuter traffic may result in the need to provide full-time staff at our fire halls, at significant cost to the existing tax base. In terms of labour costs, this represents an increase of approximately eight times, from about \$250,000 to about \$2 million. To put it another way, this represents an increase in taxes of an overall 22% for a single station.

The third issue is highways. The expansion of Highway 400 and Highway 9, the proposed extension of Highway 427 and the increased need for six additional lanes for east-west corridors across York region today are a major concern to our municipality. While the intention of the greenbelt is to protect agricultural lands and environmental features and prevent sprawl, we sense that it may be used to provide infrastructure corridors to areas beyond the greenbelt, fragmenting and undermining the very agricultural, environmental and rural lands the legislation seeks to protect.

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In conclusion, let's ensure that the greenbelt legislation accomplishes its goal of controlling urban sprawl and preserving agricultural lands. I personally believe that there must be an independent commission to thoroughly study the implications for agriculture and provide solutions for farm viability and sustainability.

Specifically, as a township we ask:

(1) Prior to the passing of the proposed Greenbelt Act, we ask you to ensure that there is appropriate provincial legislation in place to prevent urban sprawl beyond the greenbelt boundaries.

(2) Ensure that the greenbelt is not utilized as an infrastructure corridor to service and link the lands on either side.

(3) Please take the opportunity, through the Greenbelt Act, to modify and harmonize the current restrictions and limitations on agriculture within the Oak Ridges moraine conservation plan.

Thank you for allowing us to address you today.

The Chair: Is anyone else in your party going to speak? No? OK. We have eight minutes left, so two and a half minutes per party. The first speaker will be from the government side.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you, Mayor Black, for your presentation. You mention that you are a member of the Ontario Farmland Trust. I have had the opportunity to speak with members of the trust and certainly understand what the roles and objectives of that foundation are. You talk about the viability of farming and the need to protect farmland. Would you say that the issue of farmland and farm viability is distinct from the greenbelt?

Ms. Black: Yes, definitely. I think it's about money and economic viability, quite frankly, whether persons in farming can make a reasonable living.

The Chair: The official opposition.

Mrs. Munro: Thank you for coming here today to give us your analysis. When you identified issues such as the question of the highways and leapfrogging, certainly it's something that I thought of immediately when this government went ahead with this legislative proposal. But I thought we might see a response to those issues through the vehicle of the Places to Grow Act and the suggestions that were made in the original study that was done. I wonder if you have concerns as well about the fact that we seem to be looking at only half the issue.

Clearly, when the government draws a green line around a specific area, then obviously people are going to say, “Let's go outside it.” It's the same issue when communities make decisions on their own that they are going to be a destination, a place of growth, such as the areas around Collingwood and Wasaga Beach. Obviously, this has a direct impact on you.

I wondered if you could give us a sense of what you would like to see balancing this piece of legislation in terms of that long-term commitment.

Ms. Black: Certainly the Places to Grow is the place to do it. Quite frankly, we need to be planning for the whole province, probably southern Ontario, but that is a

broader area than it used to be, probably as far north as Huntsville. We need planning for that entire area. King, for example, is affected by the traffic from Orillia, Barrie, Bracebridge, those kinds of areas, and to the east, Durham, Mississauga. Margaret Coburn is with me, and her very big concern right now is the effect of Highway 427, the discussion about that possibly going through King.

Mrs. Munro: But within the limits of this legislation, those are still issues that have not been addressed. Obviously, we need to have a balance in terms of where growth is going to go and what the government is going to offer us.

Ms. Black: I agree totally. That's why it has to be about a plan for Ontario. It's nice to see the province getting into planning, but it really has to be well thought out. I'm afraid that the greenbelt legislation will actually cause the opposite of what it was intended originally to do, and that's why it's very important to take the time to make sure the proper legislation is in place for the whole planning exercise.

The Chair: Just over a minute left.

Mr. Yakabuski: Thank you very much for your presentation. I want to clarify something, because your answer to the member on the government side would seem to indicate that you were supporting her position and her party's position, which was that farm viability should be addressed outside of this greenbelt legislation. You made that statement and you tended to agree with her, but in your first line, when you talk about first agriculture, I think we want to clarify. I think your belief is that farm viability has to be encompassed in this legislation and it should be delayed until that is addressed.

Ms. Black: Absolutely. I apologize; I really misunderstood that. It needs to be studied as a separate item. Quite frankly, I think it needs a royal commission. I hate the word "commission," but I've doing a lot of thinking about it and I don't see what else you can do but have something that's called a commission, something really significant and important to address the whole issue of agriculture, to take the time and have the necessary expertise in that.

But, no, the agriculture issue: Thank you very much for bringing that up. It is very, very connected to this greenbelt. They are extremely connected. If you go ahead with the greenbelt without addressing the viability of farming, I think you're in real trouble. For example, our director of planning heard yesterday that the farmlands in south Simcoe, just to the north of us, have gone up as much as three times.

The Chair: Thank you. Ms. Churley gets the floor now. You have the remaining time.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much, and it's nice to see you again, Mayor. Generally, I support the direction you've taken here and in fact have amendments that would deal with the recommendations that you have made. So I understand what you're saying is to prevent leapfrog, because that is a major concern that we hear time and time again from all sides of this issue, that King

is opposed to infrastructure corridors and transportation corridors through the greenbelt. So you would support amendments to that effect?

Ms. Black: I'd better be careful how I answer this.

Ms. Churley: You know where I'm going, don't you, Mayor Black?

Ms. Black: Yes. We had been hearing that 427 was a done deal and it would go through King. That just ends King. We'll be one big highway: Highway 9, Highway 400 and then 427. Also, the legislation needs to be consistent. If you really, truly want to have an Oak Ridges moraine and a greenbelt and protect those areas, please make sure we don't make them one big corridor, whether it's rail—my friend to the side here reminded me of rail—or highways.

Certainly, farming has to be viable. If it is an economically viable employment opportunity, I can tell you, farmers will stay in farming. My father was just a little farmer in King. He had 20 cows and chickens and pigs—a very small operation. Mother taught. That verifies one of the prior speakers, that they all married teachers in order to support the family. He loved farming. You have to understand that those of us who are born on farms love the land; we love being out there. I can tell you, there is nothing higher than being out in that fantastic rural area on a farm. That's the big thing that I see: It has to be economically worthwhile for people to stay in it.

Ms. Churley: I think you've successfully eaten up the rest of my time, because I wanted to ask you about the big pipe, because that—

Ms. Black: Oh, you mean the little pipe.

Ms. Churley: The big pipe. That, of course, is major infrastructure going through, which in my view is a problem. It's the same kind of thing: If you build the infrastructure, they will come. How do you justify that based on—

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Churley. Your time did expire. It would have been very interesting to follow up.

Ms. Churley: It would have been.

The Chair: Thank you, Mayor Black. Thank you for your time. Thank you for appearing.

Ms. Black: I have answers, but thank you very much for hearing us.

NORTH EAST SUTTON RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION INC.

The Chair: Our next group is the North East Sutton Ratepayers Association Inc. Welcome and good afternoon. Could you state your name for Hansard, and the group that you are speaking for? When you begin, you will have 15 minutes. Should you use all your time, there will be no chance for comments or questions, but if you leave time, there will be questions from the members.

Dr. Margaretha Vandervelden: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Legislative Assembly. My name is Margaretha Vandervelden. I'm president of the North East Sutton Ratepayers Association.

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The North East Sutton Ratepayers Association is an incorporated, not-for-profit organization in the town of Georgina, a northernmost, semi-rural municipality in the south Lake Simcoe watershed in the regional municipality of York. Georgina is characterized by farmlands, woodlands, wetlands and major river systems, as well as 32 miles of Lake Simcoe shoreline. Georgina also includes the lakeside Sibbald Point Provincial Park.

Our members—hundreds of families, many with young children—thank the Ontario government for the greenbelt plan and for including the town of Georgina. Our members would like to bring to your attention a few matters that they feel would make this wonderful greenbelt plan even better for them and their families in the place where they live.

Today they want to bring to your attention certain conditions in settlement areas within the protected countryside that are potentially incompatible with promoting growth that is economically and environmentally sustainable; that is, in the greenbelt draft plan, settlement areas within the protected countryside are based on secondary plan area boundaries rather than urban service boundaries.

Using Georgina as an example, we will illustrate that the plan does not adequately address cases where:

(1) there is a large difference between secondary plan area and urban service boundaries, resulting in settlement areas that are very big and far in excess of a municipality's growth projections for these settlement areas;

(2) settlement areas include extensive natural heritage, including key natural heritage and hydrologic features. Our concern here is with the apparent exclusion of such natural heritage from schedule 4, the natural heritage system of the greenbelt draft plan.

In the town of Georgina, this is the case for the Sutton and Pefferlaw settlement areas.

Using the village of Sutton, where our organization is based, as an example, we will first discuss the issue of settlement areas far in excess of projected growth.

I have a written submission, and I would like to direct you to the second page of it. Do you have it in front of you? Otherwise, I do have some extra copies of this table, because I want to speak to a table.

The current population of the town of Georgina is 40,000, and the projected population in 2021 is about 65,000.

Schedule 4 of the greenbelt draft plan shows three settlement areas: Keswick, Sutton and Pefferlaw. These settlement areas are based on the secondary plan areas, as shown on the land use schedules of their respective secondary plans.

Table 1 shows the size and the current and projected populations for each of these settlement areas.

For this table, I want to note the following: First, compared to Sutton and Pefferlaw, the Keswick settlement area is the smallest, while, in contrast, the current and projected populations are the largest. One of the reasons is because it's the farthest south in the town of

Georgina. The case is that the Keswick secondary area is based on a secondary plan area that is identical to the urban service boundary. Therefore, Keswick residents are and will continue to be on full services. If you have this table in front of you, you will see that that is not the case for Sutton and Pefferlaw.

In the town of Georgina's official plan, Keswick is expected to take most of Georgina's growth up to 2021. It's expected that all of the projected growth plus 13,000 jobs can be accommodated within the existing urban service boundary.

In contrast, the Sutton secondary settlement area is based on a secondary plan area that is more than twice the urban service boundary; that is, 2,550 hectares, compared to 1,247 hectares of the urban service boundary. Its population is far smaller than Keswick, and its projected population is much smaller.

Our findings are that even at less than half the size of the designated settlement area, Sutton's urban service boundary area is sufficiently large to accommodate its highest growth projection, which is 10,000 additional people to a total population of 16,800, and still conserve 50% of this land base for open space. This was calculated on the basis of two-person occupancy, which is quite conservative, per home and at the existing low-density residential formula of 12.3 units per hectare; that is, without additional intensification.

I have to explain that the oversized settlement area based on the secondary plan area happened as the result of a local planning process open to undue influence from private interests and the municipality's resolve to avoid an Ontario Municipal Board hearing, and that happened in 1994 at the time of the Sutton secondary plan review and study. For further details, I direct you to pages 3 and 4 of my written submission—I have much abbreviated what is in the written submission—under "Village of Sutton: Settlement Area and Projected Growth." So this is my first concern.

Our members' second concern is that the natural heritage system, schedule 4 of the greenbelt draft plan, excludes natural heritage within settlement areas. This, to our members, seems incompatible with a natural heritage system that seeks to promote connectivity and the protection of key natural heritage and key hydrologic features as essential to the ecological integrity of the greenbelt plan, as well as to human health. The exclusion is especially a concern where a settlement area is large in size and rich in natural heritage. In Georgina, this is the case for Pefferlaw and Sutton. Once again, we'll illustrate with the village of Sutton.

Having as its northern boundary the Lake Simcoe shoreline, Sutton's settlement area contains thousands of acres of natural heritage that are contiguous to respective systems in the surrounding countryside. They include, but are not restricted to, significant woodlands and wetlands; extensive perched water table lands, and a lot of Georgina is covered with those perched water tables and clay layers and it is a big problem for developing such areas; aquifers and aquifer recharge areas; bio-

logical environmentally significant areas; corridors; habitats of species at risk; lengthy reaches of the Black River, a major tributary that connects the Oak Ridges moraine to Lake Simcoe; and many kilometres of Lake Simcoe shoreline and fish and wildlife habitat, and in the eastern part of Sutton, that includes a very high bluff which gives a beautiful view over Lake Simcoe.

Our members feel that:

(1) If key natural heritage and hydrologic features within this settlement area are excluded from the increased protection under the greenbelt draft plan and, instead, remain subject to the application of the natural heritage policy of the provincial policy statement, even when amended, then Sutton's natural heritage will be at risk. For example, to date at least 800 acres designated for development are extensively forested.

(2) Furthermore, this exclusion of natural heritage in settlement areas implements two-tier protection depending on whether such key natural and hydrologic features are located outside or inside settlement areas within the protected countryside.

(3) Increased protection of natural heritage within settlement areas will be beneficial to the ecological health of Lake Simcoe, a lake of considerable importance to our members and, actually, to all of the GTA. For example, in Sutton, all sites presently designated for development drain to Lake Simcoe directly or via the Black River and its tributaries. Increased retention of vegetation on these sites will reduce nutrient inputs—that is, pollutants—to Lake Simcoe.

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Next, as a related issue to the above, I will discuss Lake Simcoe's carrying capacity, which is also a matter of great concern to our members. As stated in the greenbelt draft plan, municipal efforts to support the long-term vitality of towns and villages include modest growth that is compatible with the capacity to provide locally based sewage and water. Policies to protect Lake Simcoe's carrying capacity apply to shoreline development requiring municipal water and sewer services. In that case only, an "analysis of the assimilative capacity of the receiving water body must be considered." In the case of Lake Simcoe, any such analysis must be considered as is stated in the greenbelt plan in the context of the Lake Simcoe environmental management strategy.

In contrast, the greenbelt draft plan specifies that no new Great Lakes-based water and sewer systems or expansions to existing Great Lakes-based systems are permitted for the purpose of serving settlement areas within the protected countryside.

To date, the outdated Lake Simcoe environmental management strategy, under the lead authority of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, has failed to address the accelerating environmental degradation of Lake Simcoe due to overwhelming changes in its watershed from urbanization, and it's reaching alarming proportions. These changes include increasingly larger volumes of effluence that, eventually, will offset any

gains from improved technologies, as well, of course, as urban runoff.

We note a request from the board of directors of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority that a carrying capacity report be completed for Lake Simcoe but relative to sustainability outside of the designated settlement areas. This may seem wholly inappropriate in that demands on carrying capacity will be mostly generated in the settlement areas.

Our recommendations:

(1) That the province establish growth as a percentage of the existing population in any settlement area and that the greenbelt plan include a requirement that municipalities adjust the settlement area boundaries in accordance with these revised projections.

(2) Alternately, in cases of discrepancies, that settlement areas be based on urban service boundaries, and not secondary plan areas, and adhere to the growth limits of their secondary plans, including projected growth.

(3) That protection of natural systems within settlement areas be the same as for natural systems elsewhere in the protected countryside.

(4) That Lake Simcoe's carrying capacity as an effluence—that is, pollution—receiver and its importance as a municipal water source for many Ontario municipalities, as well as a tourism resource, be recognized in the greenbelt plan by according it a level of protection similar to that of the Great Lakes and that carrying capacity studies include the settlement areas.

Conclusion: The town of Georgina is an example of how past land use decisions subject to strong pressures to fuel rather than manage growth led to what are presently grossly oversized settlement areas for the villages of Sutton and Pefferlaw, putting at risk hundreds of acres of natural heritage locally, as well as the ecological integrity of the natural heritage system of the protected countryside. Our area is still beautiful. In fact, I always refer to it as the Algonquin of the GTA.

So far, we have no reason to believe municipalities are willing and able to manage growth that is environmentally and economically sustainable.

I repeat that our members thank the Ontario government for its leadership in land use planning as represented through the greenbelt plan. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. Each member of each party has 30 seconds, beginning with the official opposition, Mrs. Munro.

Mrs. Munro: Thank you very much for bringing to the committee such a carefully documented submission. I have one question—well, I have many, but I have 30 seconds. One question: When you talk about the lands that are within the settlement areas, are they publicly owned lands?

Dr. Vandervelden: No, of course not. No, most of them are in the hands of developers.

Mrs. Munro: So they're not designated by the community or by the locality in terms of—

Dr. Vandervelden: I'm sorry. I don't understand your question. Neither are the lands outside the countryside. They're not in public hands either.

The Chair: I'm sorry, your time has expired for questioning. Ms. Churley.

Ms. Churley: Thank you for your very well-thought-out presentation. I just want to clarify: You feel that all settlement areas within the greenbelt area should conform to requirements prescribed for the natural heritage designation under the greenbelt plan, not just the three areas you mentioned here. You want all of them to come—

Dr. Vandervelden: Yes, absolutely. I mean, it's a matter of the greenbelt integrity.

Ms. Churley: So do I. I wanted to clarify that. Thank you very much.

Dr. Vandervelden: Absolutely. It's just that we are on the edge of the GTA. It contains so much natural heritage and is far too large for growth projections. So it has a particular impact on Sutton and Pefferlaw.

The Chair: The government side; Ms. Van Bommel.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you, Mrs. Vandervelden. Obviously, there's a lot of work that's been done in this presentation and I appreciate what you're doing here. I just want to assure you that the greenbelt draft plan is just that, a draft, and so all these things will be taken into consideration. Thank you very much.

Dr. Vandervelden: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for your delegation. We appreciate you being here today.

FRIENDS OF THE FAREWELL

The Chair: Our next delegation is Friends of the Farewell. Please come forward. Good afternoon and welcome. For the purposes of Hansard, could you identify yourself and the group you represent? You will be given 15 minutes to speak and if you leave time at the end, there will be questions by committee.

Ms. Libby Racansky: Madam Chair and members of the committee, my name is Libby Racansky. I'm a member of Friends of the Farewell, Friends of Second Marsh and many other groups in Durham region. I have named them above, in my presentation for you.

The subject of my presentation is why the Black-Farewell and Maple Grove watershed in Courtice and Bowmanville of Clarington and Oshawa Second Marsh should be included in the greenbelt.

I would like to thank you for allowing me to appear before you today. I would like to express my thanks to the province for listening to Clarington's comments for the inclusion of Lake Iroquois shoreline, the most threatened natural heritage feature, as they have described this area, in the protected lands.

Due to the time limit for my presentation, I will be quoting comments from the municipal report, leaving out some page numbers and sections. For your information, these are displayed in my written presentation and also the whole pages are appended as enclosures. You can

follow my presentation or you can turn pages, going through the enclosures I will be quoting from.

I have three requests. All of them are supported by the municipal comments on the draft greenbelt, regional or provincial studies or recommendations.

First request: There is a need of urban separator in the greenbelt. I am particularly concerned about the connectivity of the provincially significant Black-Farewell wetland complex, the largest wetland complex in the GTA, with the Oshawa Second Marsh, the largest provincially significant coastal wetland in the GTA, and the watershed between these two significant natural heritage features.

Please notice the Durham regional official plan and their urban separators between major urban conglomerations in my enclosure 1, regional official Plan.

Enclosure 2, municipal report, page 2, 2.2 states:

"Urban separators provide a green corridor of open spaces and farmlands to act as the 'lungs of the region' in the midst of urban growth and to provide for some distinct identity between communities. Any greenbelt should provide for major north-south corridors which connect Lake Ontario to the ORM, creating green infrastructure needed to protect the quality of life in a fast-growing region."

I forgot to mention—I don't know if you have had a chance to see my enclosure 1, regional official plan. Just below the official plan you can find two maps, my attachment number 8, of sensitivity of the area I'm talking about. As you can see, this area was identified with the two highest degrees of sensitivity and with a very high water table.

Back to my presentation: Narrow land strip along streams and the marsh itself, if included within the greenbelt, should not pose any threat to the development of any kind. The northern part of Courtice in Clarington is already included within the greenbelt. This part, together with stream protection leading to Second Marsh, could provide for such an urban separator.

This connection of natural heritage systems with Lake Ontario is also recommended by the draft greenbelt itself. Enclosure 3, page 10, 3.2.1, the first bullet states, "This system is part of, and connected to, broader natural heritage systems in southern Ontario such as the Lake Ontario shoreline, including its remaining coastal wetlands."

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Second request: There is a need of inclusion of all identified provincial significant wetlands located on the Lake Iroquois shoreline in the greenbelt through urban areas.

Enclosure 4—this enclosure contains four pages, if you are following along with me—the municipal report, page 8, 4.8, states, "Although the Lake Iroquois shoreline is an important element of the greenbelt, it is not identified on the greenbelt plan through the urban areas."

Page 7, 4.6, states, "There is a discrepancy on the alignment of the Lake Iroquois shoreline by the province and other sources.... Clarington has identified the limit of the Lake Iroquois shoreline in the official plan based on

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority environmental sensitive mapping project ... and Physiography of Canada by Chapman and Putnam. Provincial officials indicated that the draft greenbelt plan limit did not yet incorporate hydrogeological features such as seepage areas and springs. The province needs to have a good scientific definition on the Lake Iroquois shoreline.... The province should confirm the extent of the Lake Iroquois shoreline with the conservation authorities.”

Page 7, 4.7, states, “The greenbelt should include the entire Maple Grove complex in greenbelt, including the portions in the urban areas.”

Page 8, 4.8, states, “The greenbelt should” connect “portions of the Lake Iroquois shoreline through urban areas... more specifically north-south urban corridors that connect Lake Ontario with the greenbelt.”

Third request: The greenbelt should move tightly around existing urban centres.

The last page of enclosure 4, page 6, 4.2, states, “Provincial officials have indicated that the unprotected countryside includes almost double the amount of new urban lands anticipated to be required in the next 30 years. The province should consider a more tightly aligned greenbelt around existing urban centres to ensure that status quo development situation does not continue for years to come.”

Please see Clarington’s map, attachment 1, my enclosure 5, and make sure that all the areas—marked by me in yellow highlighter—scientifically proven to be part of the Lake Iroquois shoreline and as provincially significant wetlands will be included in the greenbelt.

The additional reasons why my requests should be considered are supported by regional and provincial documentation, and the committee could also consider these facts. Briefly, they are:

(a) That only 19% of natural area is left for infiltration in this groundwater recharge area.

(b) That this area was identified as having too high degrees of sensitivity and with a high water table level.

(c) That the area contains old growth forest that, in Ontario, amounts only to 0.07%.

(d) That this area contains species at risk.

These facts are documented by studies that I have listed for you in my presentation in enclosures 6 to 9.

Conclusion: I believe that the inclusion of lands along Second Marsh streams, with the marsh itself and the eastern part of the groundwater recharge area in Courtice within the greenbelt could ensure sustainability of this watershed. In fact, MNR is recommending exactly the same thing as I am. Enclosure 10, MNR wetland evaluation study, pages 3 and 4 state, “Major wetland functions and features should be maintained; the interconnection of wetlands and uplands must be maintained. Improved connections to the south would better link Black-Farewell to Lake Ontario and the provincially significant Second Marsh, a premier lakeshore wetland.”

The greenbelt draft vision and goals on page 9 are in support of continuous and connected systems of open space, protection of natural heritage, protection and sus-

taining of ecological functions and features, and conservation of natural resources.

The greenbelt is an important step toward the reform of the land use planning process. If the above comments would be considered, this plan could promote more sustainable urban development.

I understand that it was very hard to identify all natural heritage features in the draft greenbelt plan. Some of these were identified by MNR in 2004, and the digital mapping is not yet available. For this reason, these features were not included in the draft.

For your orientation and to understand my three requests that are supported by the municipal, regional and provincial documentation, I have displayed three maps on the cover of my presentation. The requested changes are highlighted in yellow and numbered.

The map of the greenbelt in the left-hand corner is giving you the location of the area of concern, Courtice and Bowmanville. In the upper right-hand corner, you can see the map in detail and the requested changes to the draft. In the lower right-hand corner is the municipal map, attachment 1 of their recommendations to the draft. I am using this map as my enclosure 5. It’s much larger, so maybe you can follow on this enclosure. In it, you can clearly see the changes they are requesting the province to acknowledge.

The first request is asking for the connection of highlighted streams with the largest remaining coastal wetland along Lake Ontario, Oshawa Second Marsh. This was done for the watershed in Whitby, to connect to the second-largest coastal wetland, Lynde Creek Marsh.

The second request is asking for the inclusion of all headwaters, seepages, springs and provincially significant wetlands located on the Lake Iroquois shoreline. Without this protection, the local stream would not be able to function. Please see the MNR map of the identified wetlands marked 5+, directly following their attachment 1, on the second page of my enclosure 5. These provincially significant wetlands are not identified in the greenbelt.

The third request is asking for the inclusion of two sensitive areas in the greenbelt. These areas are located outside of urban boundaries. There was neither an amendment to the official plan approved nor any public meeting requesting these changes.

Therefore, there should not be any difficulty for this committee to recommend that the inclusion of downstream along the streams and the Oshawa Second Marsh, the inclusion of the areas located outside of the urban boundary and all provincially significant wetlands within the undeveloped urban land in the greenbelt could create a perfect plan, protecting the environment, residents and economy.

Please consider these three changes when deciding on the final greenbelt.

The Chair: Thank you for your delegation. As there are only two parties at the table, the first question goes to the government side.

Ms. Matthews: Thank you very much for this very well-thought-out and well-presented presentation to us. I appreciate the time you have taken to put it together and present today.

I do want to let you know that the draft plan is just a draft, so we're actually discussing the enabling legislation here. I just want to clarify that you are in fact very supportive of the plan and you would like to see the area covered expanded, as opposed to being delayed or held up for any reason.

Ms. Racansky: Yes, I am.

Ms. Matthews: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Munro: Thank you for coming here today with some very specific recommendations. As the government member has said, obviously this is the kind of opportunity you have to draw the attention of the committee to those kinds of anomalies. I certainly want to congratulate you on the depth of your research in looking at these things. Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Churley, did you have a question? You have about a minute.

Ms. Churley: Sorry, I was called outside, but I had a good look at your presentation. Thank you. I just want you to know that I support many of your recommendations here and will be making amendments that will deal with many of them throughout the process, and hopefully the government will support them. Thank you very much for the very thorough job you did today.

Ms. Racansky: It was just artistic homework.

The Chair: You get a good mark on your homework. It was good. Thank you very much.

1300

PENNARD INVESTORS
GARONT INVESTMENTS
BREN-COLL HOLDINGS

The Chair: Our next delegation is Pennard Investors Inc., Garont Investments Ltd. and Bren-Coll Holdings Inc. Would they come forward? Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us this afternoon. You will have 15 minutes to speak. If you could tell Hansard your name and the group you're speaking for, you will have 15 minutes when you begin.

Ms. Heidi Kreiner-Ley: Thank you. My name is Heidi Kreiner-Ley. I represent Pennard Investors, which is my sister, Garont Investments Ltd., which is my mother, Joseph Kreiner, my father, and Bren-Coll Holdings, my niece and nephews. I wish to thank the standing committee today for giving me the opportunity to present.

We have been in contact with our planning consulting firm, Weston Consulting Group Inc., since discussions regarding the Greenbelt Act commenced to be kept apprised as landowners on issues that may affect our lands. I am here today to provide you with our input, which our planning consultants have prepared in consultation with us and through their intricate knowledge of the lands in the York region area.

Our lands are located in Block 27 in the city of Vaughan. Just for the record, Block 27 is bounded by Kirby to the south, Keele Street on the east side, Jane Street on the west side and the King-Vaughan line to the north. In our opinion and in the opinion of Weston Consulting Group, there are lands there that have been erroneously designated as protected countryside, and this is clearly outlined in the report I am presenting to you today.

As outlined in the report, there is an error in designation which has serious detrimental impacts on the owners of the lands that are tablelands or mere seasonal drainage features. To use the broad brush of the Greenbelt Act on such a minor unconnected feature is like swatting a fly with a jackhammer. The damage to families could be financially devastating. We beseech that you take our presentation and our planning consultant's recommendations seriously and remove the inappropriate protected countryside designation in Block 27 and Block 28 to the south from Bill 135.

The following summary of comments and recommendations is in response to Bill 135, the Greenbelt Act, 2004, and the draft greenbelt plan:

(1) We ask that you re-examine the greenbelt designations and correct designation errors. For example, an agricultural drainage feature has been proposed as protected countryside within Block 27 and 28 in the city of Vaughan. However, this feature does not provide any linkage between the feature in question and either the Oak Ridges moraine or the Niagara Escarpment. It is a dead-end area that protects no known existing biological features, functions or linkages and which is situated on actively cultivated lands.

(2) The greenbelt plan represents big-picture planning and, as a result, should provide local municipalities and conservation authorities with a general framework for the protected countryside area. However, specific standards, such as the 60-metre setbacks required under section 5.4 of the plan, should be established through detailed technical studies to the satisfaction of municipalities and conservation authorities. This approach would establish more appropriate standards on a case-by-case basis rather than setting a common standard for all features within the natural heritage designation, as some features are more prominent than others.

(3) Provide flexibility within the greenbelt plan for reductions to buffer widths associated with natural heritage features on lands adjacent to urbanized areas that are slated for future growth. For example, the proposed greenbelt plan will require the determination of boundaries along the east branch of the Don River within Block 27. This will result in the imposition of greater restrictions and will also divide the block, placing major infrastructure constraints that will create inefficiencies, including increased servicing costs for an area adjacent to urbanized lands and slated for future growth.

(4) The greenbelt plan should not counteract the existing policy framework set out in our local official plans. For example, official plan amendment 600 in the city of

Vaughan has policy framework in place that establishes valley and stream corridors during the preparation of the master serving plan for the block plan through detailed site inspection, supported by the required technical studies; for example, flood study, geotechnical report etc.

(5) Various provincial initiatives currently under consideration seek to empower local municipalities with greater decision-making powers. Bill 135 and the proposed greenbelt plan remove such empowerment with respect to decision-making based on restricting amendments to the 10-year review of the plan and the prohibitive provisions for locally initiated urban expansion initiatives.

While the province claims to have established the greenbelt plan through a combination of the best science available, a consideration of existing and future patterns of urbanization, and local knowledge and advice—in section 1.1—this is in fact not true, with a perfect example being Block 27 and Block 28 in the city of Vaughan. Given the lack of any ecological linkages and the absence of natural features in most of the proposed greenbelt area, there appears to be no substantive basis for the protected countryside designation for either Block 27 or Block 28.

(6) The recommendation is to coordinate Bill 135 and the greenbelt plan with the greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan to ensure that both documents complement each other and are consistent in their policies, rather than contradictory in some form.

I also want to make the comment that I agree with Mr. William Hasiuk, one of the previous presenters, regarding expropriation without compensation. Regarding the areas I'm talking about in the two block plans in the city of Vaughan, if the lands would be looked at physically, we're looking at how they've taken a green swath through it. It is very much tablelands, yet they're looking at it as if it was a stream corridor when in fact there is no stream corridor there, more of an agricultural runoff for the spring.

Those are our comments.

The Chair: Thank you very much. You've left us about two minutes and a bit of opportunity for each party. From our side, it would be Mr. Duguid.

Mr. Duguid: I'll start with your last comment. You talked about expropriation without consultation. I've heard of no such thing happening anywhere in the greater Golden Horseshoe with regard to any initiative our government has taken. Are you aware of any expropriation taking place that I may not be aware of?

Ms. Kreiner-Ley: No, I'm saying that with this property, for example, where you're designating an area that should be protected for natural heritage features when in fact our opinion is that there is no natural heritage feature there and it would require further study to prove it, we're saying the land is being expropriated with no compensation. There are reasons that the Greenbelt Act is going into place to protect certain areas, but there is nothing in the area that has been designated in

Block 27 and Block 28 that has any natural heritage features, in our opinion.

1310

Mr. Duguid: I'm not aware of any changes to zoning or current uses being contemplated either. Are you aware of anything special in this particular area? I'd want to know if we are doing that; it's my belief we're not.

Ms. Kreiner-Ley: Well, for example, the two blocks we're talking about are being looked at for future development and are just outside the settlement area. If the Greenbelt Act keeps this area as a natural heritage feature, the swath you're taking from it encompasses lands that have no natural heritage features on them, in our opinion, and then that area—it is onerous on the land for any future development or use.

Mr. Duguid: So you're aware that the current use of the land is not changing. What you're concerned about is that you'd like to change the current use of the land to something else.

Ms. Kreiner-Ley: It's diminishing the value of the land substantially, yes.

Mr. Duguid: Thank you.

Mr. Klees: Thank you for this presentation. You've really focused in on the issue here. You've presented the committee with a specific piece of property that the greenbelt, in broad strokes, designates a natural area—effectively a core area where no future development can take place, and yet, when you look at it closely, there isn't a scientific basis on which to make that decision. As a property owner, I think you're simply saying to the government, why would you not allow the latitude for us to come forward to present our scientific evidence, to look at it more closely, and to allow those areas that are not environmentally sensitive to be developed, if that is the appropriate future use for them? But this legislation precludes all of that.

Ms. Kreiner-Ley: That's correct.

Mr. Klees: Hence the expropriation without compensation.

I would like to ask you, have you had any assistance from Vaughan, for example? Because they have viewed this as a potential area for future urban expansion.

Ms. Kreiner-Ley: Yes, they have.

Mr. Klees: Has Vaughan offered to work with you to make representations to the government, to make these technical points? If so, what feedback has there been?

Ms. Kreiner-Ley: I believe they're doing that at this time, or that they have at least given a written submission. I was talking to Peter Weston of Weston Consulting, and I believe that is underway at this time.

Mr. Klees: I think the bottom line is that submissions such as this should be good evidence for the government to look again at these delineations and ensure that there is at least some latitude for property owners and municipalities to come forward and apply for variation. One of the things that I think would be appropriate is for there to be a permanent mechanism set up whereby municipalities or property owners could come forward, make their appeals and present the appropriate information, docu-

mentation and evidence so we could then have some fairness in this legislation. I think that's really all you're asking for.

Ms. Kreiner-Ley: I think that is. When we look at—

The Chair: I'm sorry, we're going to have to go to the next speaker. Ms. Churley?

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much for your presentation. I know you're not here to talk about the overall plan but something very specific. I want to follow up on Mr. Duguid's question, because I'm not quite clear about what the problem is with the parcels of land you're talking about. What is the present zoning of the land?

Ms. Kreiner-Ley: Currently it's zoned agricultural.

Ms. Churley: In that case, is this act changing that zoning? That's what I don't quite get. If it's currently zoned agricultural, how is this changing that?

Ms. Kreiner-Ley: It's not going to change the current zoning, but both of these blocks are already being looked at by the city of Vaughan for future growth. If you look at the map, it's this little green finger in the middle of the yellow that extends. We're saying that in that area, there is no scientific basis for what they based that on. As a matter of fact, if you were to walk the land that they have designated green in that finger, much of it is tableland. The natural heritage features that they're trying to protect, valley land or whatever that extension is, have no scientific basis.

Over the years, when the city of Vaughan developed its official plan, and when conservation has been involved, any time there is a concern about a natural heritage feature, we always have to present and prepare very detailed submissions on flood lands, on geo-technical—a lot of studies and scientific fact on how to treat these lands. The city, the municipalities and conservation have always been very strict with us.

We're saying that if this swath comes in and the government designates it without any scientific basis, it gives us no opportunity to prove to you that there is no concern there. They've just come in and said that there's a concern, without any scientific basis or giving us the opportunity to prove otherwise.

Ms. Churley: I hear what you're saying. On the other hand, it is already designated as agricultural land, which is what a greenbelt is supposed to be.

Ms. Kreiner-Ley: Both blocks are farmed by tenant farmers. There are no resident farmers.

The Chair: Thank you for your time. We appreciate your being here today.

GTA FEDERATIONS OF AGRICULTURE

The Chair: Our last presenter for this morning's session is indicated as being Mr. David Lyons. I understand there is a substitute. I believe Mr. Lambrick is the next speaker. Welcome. Please identify yourself for Hansard, and when you begin, you'll have 10 minutes.

Mr. Peter Lambrick: My apologies for David Lyons not being here. He couldn't be here today.

I am Peter Lambrick. I am a farmer in Halton region. I farm within the Niagara Escarpment.

I'm a member of the Halton Federation of Agriculture, which is a member of the GTA Agricultural Action Committee. The four federations within the GTA make up this action committee, along with the four regional planning departments. There is a great deal of ongoing help and agreement within the federations and the planning departments. It was Helma Geerts from Halton region who helped me put this submission together.

The GTA federations got this together back in 1998. We decided that we needed to expound that agriculture was an asset to the greater community. To do that, we put together an agricultural impact study, which was then repeated in 2001 when the 2001 census material was available, at which time we approached the regional chairs to work together with them and their planning departments. It has been an ongoing situation with them since then, along with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in a supportive role, with some funding coming from the federal government.

Our key messages to you today are that keeping agriculture in the GTA is not just a land-use planning issue.

The Chair: They're having trouble picking you up. Could you speak a little louder?

Mr. Lambrick: My apologies. The focus has to be on agricultural sustainability first.

The GTA agricultural action plan has taken a very comprehensive approach. We realize that it cannot be done by ourselves. We need the province to be involved, but the province is not the municipal affairs and this planning designation. It requires our own Ministry of Agriculture. If we wish to go ahead and brand our food and sell it in Toronto, we need their Foodland Ontario experience. We need them to help us with value chains, how to get into nutraceuticals, bio-diesel as it affects the city. We also need industry, trade and commerce for economic development. We need finance in there as well to help us make certain that we are not taxed off our land or that secondary uses are not taxed out of existence. We need transport to make certain that we have routes to and from our market.

1320

We are always aligned with environment. Farmers are the environmentalists. We have always been consistent with their policies. We feel that we have a great deal to give as far as Kyoto is concerned. Growing crops clean the air. We also protect the groundwater.

Growth and agriculture do present both a challenge and yet an opportunity. Through our official plans, we identified that there will still be agricultural land here 50 years from now, so our ongoing plan is, how do we make that farming feasible for people 50 years down the road when the infrastructure is likely to be gone? The critical mass is not going to be there. What do we need to make these people sustainable? We need to maybe change the mindset of the farmers themselves. How do we go through this educational process? When we have such a

market right on our doorstep, how do we get into that market and how do we improve? This is the basis of the agricultural action plan.

In our research, we found major differences that had happened in a five-year period. The number of farms was down 16%, the number of acres farmable was down 7%, but we're still an industry that is generating \$600 million at the farm gate. We're very productive in this area, as it is now. We have already started a trend toward nurseries, nursery products, greenhouse production and more toward amenity agriculture such as the Springridges, the Chudleighs, the Andrews' Scenic Acres. We also found that there are 100,000 more mouths coming into the Toronto-GTA area every year, so we see that as a captive market. How do we make some changes to address that?

Economic development is one of the features and what we call the first part of our plan's contents. Who needs the market? How do we satisfy that market? What are the capital requirements going to be? What alliances can be made? What value chains can be struck? But along the line, we have taken a long-range approach that if this plan is to go ahead, farmers themselves have to be viable. The whole issue cannot be answered just by a land use designation.

Education and marketing will be our next step. How do we change the mindset of farmers who are going to be there? How do we market ourselves to our neighbours?

Land use policy is the third, so it is down in our estimation; it's not the first. We have had very good response from our local planning authorities and we have always supported their official plans and felt that they were doing what they needed to do, and that is to allow for the expansion necessary for growth in the GTA. The GTA agricultural action plan is a shared vision, with shared actions to be undertaken not only by the agriculture industry, but at all levels of government. But agriculture must be financially stable and sustainable for the farmers to be there. We feel that public policy will help us to do that. What is needed is an understanding by the government that agriculture is a value, and we don't necessarily see that within this legislation. We may need such things as the strengthening of the food land protection act, the fact that it is not considered by the public as parkland, that it's agricultural land, such things as support for supply management and seasonal price protection where necessary, and the ability to make a profit for the farmer. The farmer will do the rest and protect your land.

There are nine priority actions coming out of the action plan. The need for economic development is not just from agriculture itself and the municipalities; it is needed at higher levels of government. The reforms in agriculture and the changing of the taxation are driving some people out of value-added.

We need to recognize the cultural diversity that is right on our doorstep and how we feed that. We will need programs to assist in succession duties and supporting young farmers.

The Chair: Can you summarize? You have about 10 seconds left.

Mr. Lambrick: Very good. In making it happen, the province needs to be involved, but it is not the only player. We feel we have been supportive of other planning factors such as Places to Grow, where it defines densification, and that is one of the factors that we think will save agricultural land. So in our minds, the greenbelt is not the only piece of legislation that is needed.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lambrick. You've exhausted your time. We appreciate your being here today.

This committee is recessed now. In order for us to have a reasonable time for lunch, we'll be back here at 2:30. We're recessed.

The committee recessed from 1328 to 1431.

The Chair: I call the meeting to order. We're reconvening on the matter of Bill 135, the Greenbelt Act. I apologize to those of you who were here earlier, but we ran a little late on our morning delegations.

KIM EMPRINGHAM

The Chair: We'll begin this afternoon with our first delegation, Kim Empringham, landowner. Please come forward. Welcome. If you could identify yourself, and I guess you're speaking as an individual, so if you could give your address. When you begin, you will have 10 minutes. Should you use all of your 10 minutes, there won't be any questions or opportunity for comment from anybody around the table, but if you leave time there will be.

Ms. Kim Empringham: My name is Kim Empringham. I'm a landowner from York region. My address is 12900 Kennedy Road, Stouffville. I am a sixth-generation York region farmer. I grew up in the shadow of the city, on a dairy farm in Markham that my family has worked since 1834. I married a beef farmer, and now my husband and I have a 250-head beef feedlot and corn, grain and oilseed operation in Whitchurch-Stouffville. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to come today to speak to you about my thoughts on Bill 135.

Over the last 30 years we have witnessed many things that have had very harmful effects on our farming community. There has been an increase in traffic flow and congestion, to the point that it is not safe to take equipment on the road, especially during the morning and evening rush.

We have seen the loss of neighbouring farms as owners retire from farming and sell out to either speculators or non-farming owners because the land price had been driven up and it was too expensive for farmers to buy.

We feel an ever-increasing lack of respect for the business of farming and our stewardship of the land. More often, farming is being portrayed to the general public as a nice way of life, not the business of food production. Farmers are often wrongly accused of having a lack of respect for the environment and polluting at every turn.

In reality, we have a record of good environmental stewardship, and our farming practices improve the environment. An average hectare of corn absorbs 22 tonnes of carbon dioxide, and agricultural land provides wildlife corridor connectivity.

Farmers in this region find that there is an ever-increasing number of nuisance complaints and conflicts with our non-farm neighbours because the general public is not aware of normal farm practices or our right-to-farm legislation.

We are also faced with all of the other issues that plague farming in the rest of the province. Commodity price collapses and new government legislation such as BSE, nutrient management and source water protection all bring the viability of farming into question. Compliance with new regulations will add to our cost of production.

We are happy to pay our fair share of these initiatives, but I believe that if society is going to benefit from these environmental programs, they should share the associated costs as well. Farmers have no way of passing along any increases in our cost of production. We need adequate support to put these programs into place to ensure a strong and viable agricultural industry. It's important not only to farmers but to society as a whole, given that in the GTA alone, agriculture generates \$1.3 billion in gross annual sales and supports more than 34,000 jobs.

Given all of this, the thing that worries me the most about the future of agriculture in the greenbelt is the loss of equity in our land. For agriculture to be viable in the greenbelt, we cannot lose the equity in our farms.

Food production close to the city has always been different than in other parts of Ontario. Land values are inflated. This is mostly due to speculation that the land will one day be taken over by urban development. But since this has been the case for decades, the farmers in the area have largely been forced to rent neighbouring farms from speculators or estate owners instead of buying them, because the cost of purchasing the land is much too prohibitive to ever pay off in farming. Therefore, the equity we have in our farms is based on a much smaller percentage of acres owned than the average Ontario farm of equal size. We need to protect the equity of our farms to ensure access to operating loans and capital funding.

If the government is serious when it says that the greenbelt should preserve agricultural lands for future generations and that the Golden Horseshoe is home to some of North America's most valuable prime agricultural land, then you have to go much further than just freezing the land to development. We have to reclaim some of the lost agricultural land before it is gone forever.

Over the years, many farms and individual fields have been neglected in the hands of speculators who either wanted the land left vacant to make it easier to get development rights or didn't see any reason to keep the land in good condition by controlling fencerows and

repairing broken tile drains because it was eventually going to be developed.

While I do agree that some of the vacant land adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas or those that could link sensitive areas should be preserved, I feel there are many acres of idle land in amongst productive farmland that should be returned to productivity to support a viable agriculture industry. The cost to do this on rented land, where there is no long-term guarantee to regain cost output, can be prohibitive. I believe the government could provide incentives to get the land back into production in the same way that various levels of government and NGOs provide assistance with tree planting and environmental upgrades to support the greening of our communities.

Agriculture has a good record of environmental stewardship over the land. If preserving agriculture in the greenbelt is as important as preserving the environment, then I believe the government should support the reintroduction of vacant land back into farming. Agricultural land trusts and the government's buying development rights to the farms would also provide economic stability to farmers and make food production more viable in the greenbelt.

I urge you to delay implementation of Bill 135 until you've had time to work out all of the issues affecting the viability of farming in the greenbelt. The programs have to be put in place first, not as an afterthought. You need to get it right or we will soon see the end of farming in this area.

Ten years from now, when the greenbelt plan is up for review, my two daughters will be of an age to decide whether they want to farm or not. I just hope they will be the seventh generation in our family to farm next to the city.

The Chair: That leaves us with three minutes, so each party will have three minutes. The first speaker is Ms. Churley.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much for your presentation. It's good to hear from people who are directly affected by any legislation coming forward.

One of the conundrums about this is that on one hand you say delay the legislation until all these things are in place, but on the other hand, farmland is rapidly being eaten up and developed. I don't know if you heard it this morning, but a study showed that Ontario is the worst across the country in terms of more and more prime agricultural farmland being paved over, bought up by developers etc. The longer we keep that option open, the more farmland we're going to lose.

1440

I recognize what you're saying. It's a catch-22, though, isn't it? Because we need these programs and things in place in order to keep farming viable.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Ms. Churley, your time has expired.

Ms. Churley: Oh. I thought you said I had longer.

The Chair: You've got a minute.

Ms. Churley: Sorry you have no time to respond, but that's the conundrum to think about here.

The Chair: From the government side? You have one minute.

Mr. Lalonde: Thank you for your presentation. I have a question. You specified that the government should protect agricultural land. The main goal of this greenbelt legislation is to protect agricultural land. You said we should delay the passing of this legislation. Can you tell me why you are asking? Because what we have gone through at the present time is that more and more speculators are buying land, as you just mentioned in your statement, and then—

The Chair: You have 10 seconds to answer this question now.

Ms. Empringham: OK, quickly. I believe you could possibly extend the freeze that you have now on the agricultural land until you get the programs in place. We've had the freeze for a little over a year now; extend it long enough to get it worked out.

The Chair: Thank you for your answer. The official opposition?

Mr. Klees: Thank you very much for your presentation. I find it interesting that there's a common theme that these hearings are echoing. We hear from the farming community that there needs to be something in place for the agricultural community in terms of stabilization, in terms of a program, before this is implemented. We hear from property owners, developers and municipalities that the Places to Grow strategy should be in place before the greenbelt legislation. I'm hoping that with presentations such as yours, which makes a very strong case—just simply, no one is opposed to being environmentally responsible, but what we want is for the government to be responsible to its citizens and taxpayers as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Klees. Your time has expired.

Mr. Klees: It's that balance that I—

The Chair: Thank you very much for your delegation. We appreciate your being here today.

JOHN DONER

The Chair: Our next is Mr. John Doner. Is that you?

Mr. John Doner: Thank you, honourable Chairperson.

The Chair: Welcome. Can I ask that you identify yourself for Hansard? You're an individual landowner and you're going to—

Mr. Doner: My name is John Doner. I'm an individual landowner, lot 35, concession 3, which is 12119 Leslie Street.

The Chair: Terrific. Thank you very much. You have 10 minutes in which to make your presentation. If you use all your time, we won't get to questions.

Mr. Doner: Honourable Chairperson and esteemed members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to address you regarding these important issues. As I

said, my name is John Doner. My wife, June, and I have lived in Gormley all our lives and have raised four children, who are now married adults and planning families of their own.

I was born on lot 35, concession 3, in Markham township. This is the family farm that my family settled after coming from Pennsylvania 199 years ago. We are, I believe, the oldest farm in York region under continuous family ownership. My children are the eighth generation.

We own 100 acres of the original homestead and rent an additional 4,000 in this area, much of which lies within the proposed greenbelt and the Oak Ridges moraine. Along with two of my sons and six other employees, I farm this acreage in corn, canola, soybeans and wheat, all of which fall under the category of grain and oilseeds. We're also a licensed grain elevator and grain storage facility and we receive grain, a substantial amount of which is produced in York region. As much as possible, we handle that grain.

Through my 40 years of experience farming and 30 years of dealing in grain, I want to speak to you from the perspective of a grain grower and a grain elevator operator from this area. I want to be factual with what I say. I'm going to be quick and fast. I want to make as many points as I possibly can, and I will be blunt.

As stated in the Greenbelt Act, it is your intention to protect this valuable farmland. I pose this question, then, for your consideration: Who will farm this protected land? Here are some facts you should address.

Consider that the average age of an Ontario farmer is 59 years old. That's from Stats Canada. This would mean that the median age is actually 62 or 63. Personally, I do not know of anyone in this area under 30 years of age who is starting a career in farming. In a few years, this physically demanding occupation will be staffed with a workforce of retirees. Farming is literally a dying industry in Ontario, and there are some very real reasons for this decline.

Prices for the product we grow are driven down by the US practice of illegal long-run dumping in Ontario of their surplus grains such as corn—that's going on today—at below their cost of production. For example, in 1973 I sold corn for \$90 a tonne. Today, some 32 years later, that same corn is worth \$88, despite the fact that the costs of all inputs—seed, fertilizer etc.—required to grow that crop have increased drastically over the 30 years by as much as 500%-plus for some items. If there is little or no profit in farming, there is no incentive for the next generation, of which my sons are part, to take over, and certainly no reason for me to encourage my children to continue in a career that I have seen decline so drastically in my numerous years of experience.

If the government truly values the importance of farming in Ontario, and especially in York region, it is past time for the farmer's voice to be heard by this government. If you want our production, then it is time to start paying for it. It is noteworthy to point out that under Quebec's ASRA program, farmers in that province receive \$185 a tonne for the same corn that we are selling

for \$97 less here. This is the same product. Is there any doubt why farmers in Ontario are struggling to survive? How can the Ontario government claim to truly wish to protect this greenbelt for farmland while systematically crippling the farmer financially by failing to provide sufficient support? Ontario outdoes only Newfoundland in terms of units of support.

You might think that this is not relevant to the issue being discussed here today, but I wholeheartedly disagree. It is short-sighted to ignore the fact that Ontario farmers simply cannot continue farming if there is little or no money to be made. Ask yourself, would you continue to do your job if your salary were cut every year? If every year your expenses and inflation made your cost of living higher and your income was continually decreasing, would you continue in your current occupation? Now take that premise one step farther: Would you consider encouraging your children to pursue the same path?

The point I am trying to illustrate is that protected farmland is worthless if there is no one left to farm it. Perhaps it would be more productive for this government to protect the farmer, protect the prices we receive for our product and encourage those you have left in agriculture by actually supporting their needs and by hearing their voice. Protection of the farmland at this point is just putting the cart before the horse.

Ironically, the vast majority of the farmland you wish to protect is not actually still owned by farmers. Of the 75 landlords on the 4,000 acres I rent, not one is the original farmer—not one.

As an elevator, I have watched my wheat customer base go from 125 producers in 1978 to 16 this year. Those who currently farm are approaching an age at which they want to get out but cannot for many reasons, one of which is taxation. My neighbour and friend is in his eighties and fighting Alzheimer's. He resides on a 90-acre farm that's two doors south of us, lot 33, concession 3, of which 47 acres are farmable. I farm this 47 acres for him and for the last two years have seen him lose approximately \$5,000 per year on a fixed income. In 1988, he did attempt to sell but the deal fell through. If he doesn't farm his land, he will face increased taxation by York region, which will increase his tax burden to nearly \$2,000 per acre. That's a fact. That works out to about \$180,000.

Two further examples of this: In 2002, taxes on 43 acres on lot 25, concession 3 east—that's on Woodbine north of Major Mac—increased to \$83,000; taxes last year on lot 29, concession 1 in the township of Vaughan, a 55-acre parcel, increased to \$125,000. Those taxes under farming would have been approximately \$7,000 each. In the last case, this was because the owner was no longer strong enough to work the land himself. This tax increase was imposed upon the farmer for not farming the land he owns.

Consider, then, these realities of farming in Ontario:

(1) Currently, because of insufficient government support, farmers cannot afford to farm their land.

(2) If the farmer stops farming his land, he is hit with tax penalties, as the land is now taxed as residential rather than as agricultural, and these increases are so severe that this would financially ruin him. Therefore, farmers cannot afford not to farm the land. That's why some of us are still farming.

1450

If this Greenbelt Act passes, the provincial government will dictate that the land cannot be sold for any use other than agriculture. Considering the last two realities, there are few customers willing to purchase that farmer's land.

In what way are these restrictions and practices by our provincial government fair to the farmers? The conditions imposed upon the farming community affected by this greenbelt legislation are as unjust as they are unethical.

In making your decision, I ask you to consider the families you will inevitably affect. They are people just like you who have worked hard all their lives, people like the Evans family and the Kingdons, people like my family, who, if this greenbelt legislation is passed, will see the nest egg of equity they thought they had built in their farms over the past several decades be reduced to a fraction of what it should be. Before this act sees its review in 10 years, more than half of my customers in York region will be gone because of age alone, unrelated to economics. If you want to protect this farmland, you have to protect the occupation of farming first.

I have heard talk about how the greenbelt is a good thing for future generations. Do you realize that freezing development in this area has resulted in doubling the price of raw developable land outside of the greenbelt? Given the fact that most young people now graduate from post-secondary education with student debt in excess of \$40,000, will they ever be able to afford a home in your GTA? By stopping development, what we are actually creating is astonishingly expensive housing in York region that our young people simply cannot possibly afford. For example, four years ago, a new detached 1,900—

The Chair: Mr. Doner, you have a minute left. I just thought you might want to summarize.

Mr. Doner: OK. Housing has gone up in four years on a 1,900-square-foot house by about \$150,000.

I'll go on; I'll skip a little bit. Keep in mind that if this agricultural land is to be protected, my farm can only be sold for other agricultural purposes. It is doubtful that 83% of those respondents supporting this belt would support a new livestock operation on my farm just down the road from where they live. Therefore, the actual agricultural use for my land is selective.

Please consider some of the terms of the Expropriations Act, that you are restricting our bundle of rights without the land being taken. Consider the term "injurious affection," its definition and its meaning for us.

In summary, I would like to reiterate that it is not my wish to see the land exploited. It is my homestead and my history. I would like to say that what has been in-

valuable to me—our land, our farm, our homestead—has been threatened to be made un-valuable by this proposed legislation. As you drive to your homes tonight, think of us. Think of those people you're going to affect. Think about how you would feel if someone told you that because you like things the way they are, you would never be able to see the fruits of your labour, that many of your investments could never be cashed in, for instance, that the value of your home would be slashed to a fraction.

The Chair: Mr. Doner, I'm sorry, but your time has expired. We do have your submission, and I assure you that members will read it.

Mr. Doner: I was interrupted by some music in the back.

The Chair: I actually gave you some more time to counter that.

Mr. Doner: I appreciate that. Thank you very much. I'm sorry it was long. I couldn't get rid of the points I wanted to make.

The Chair: We appreciate that you came and that you were passionate. We did appreciate that. Thank you very much.

BRUCE PEARSE

The Chair: Our next delegation is Bruce Pearse. Welcome, Mr. Pearse. Could you identify yourself and your address for Hansard? When you begin, you will have 10 minutes.

Mr. Bruce Pearse: Thank you. My name is Bruce Pearse, and I reside at 16190 Highway 12, Sunderland, Ontario. I am a landowner and farmer in both the greenbelt and the Oak Ridges moraine, and previously from the 1973 proposed and yet unbuilt Pickering airport. I am the fifth generation of our family to farm in southern Ontario. I am the most efficient related to volume produced and the most conscientious about documentation in terms of the environment. I provide traceability of my production and carry multiple licences to be compliant to farm in Ontario today. I also earn the least per acre, per bushel, per pound, relative to my efforts and expenses in all of the last two centuries the Pearses have farmed in Ontario.

We have lived through drought, wet years, low prices, and markets that do not respond to consumer demand, availability of product or the quality of our production. The rights to margins demanded by retailers and, more recently, technology use agreements garner others more profit from our products and efforts than we receive for taking the associated risks. Rural people's pride in homes, community, family values, livestock and growing crops are the reward for these many hardships.

BSE took away the value of our cattle. Low prices and open borders took away the value of our crops. Pickering airport expropriation took away communities. And the greenbelt and Oak Ridges moraine will take away pride of ownership, equity and pensions.

Expropriation laws provide for a right to compensation to a party from whom land is taken. When regulations make the act of an authority lawful—the taking of land or rights without compensation—which would otherwise be considered unlawful, or an act that is just a nuisance, there is no remedy or penalty. There is no process of appeal to hold this authority accountable for arbitrarily heavy-handed actions done in the name of the public good.

Shouldn't the taxes I pay into this democracy guarantee a certain measure of fairness? This is the same society that spends and sends thousands of dollars to promote democracy and equal rights as a better alternative to oppressed peoples in other parts of the world. Rural people from whom rights are taken for this greenbelt are carrying a more grievous injury and disproportionate load to their estate than the benefiting public at large. This amounts to an uncredited and unfair tax.

When did this government's viewpoint about fairness begin to differ from those who feed a nation? A deal must at least be perceived to be fair both ways. When I was young, my mother had no time for settling disputes between my sister and I. I am not sure whether she was concerned about our teeth, saving money or teaching the lessons of life, but she often bought just one chocolate bar. This should have caused huge fights, and in the beginning it did, until we learned about fairness. One would divide; the other would choose.

I challenge you to take any part of the public sector's pension plan—I suggest the firefighters, teachers or police associations are good examples—for the public good, of course, since the good public has the authority to act unchallenged and above the democratic process. See if there is any opposition to an erosion of pension equity that would result in lost favour or votes or poor work ethics of a sector whose services are deemed necessary for the success of society today.

The short-sightedness and lack of scope of this plan does not achieve the goal intended. The intent is to stop urban sprawl by dealing with the rural area. You are not going to preserve agriculture through zoning and thereby land preservation. Do you not realize that agriculture is not a zoning? Agriculture is people with skills applied to land. Take away the people and their desire to work, through lack of pay or pride of ownership or undue and unnecessary regulation, and you will collapse your present cheap food source in rural Ontario. Rural Ontario will then become a have-not province within this province of abundance. The land will not preserve its present look or productiveness. Case in point: the Pickering airport. It is evidenced by your own inability to govern and manage the Pickering area, resulting in the added need for private security, a transient and fragmented community and a lack of pride of ownership resulting in general degradation and ruin.

The age of the present workforce in agriculture makes retirement an imminent fact. At approximately 60 years of age, rural Ontario's workforce is wearing out and not being renewed. We are losing an indigenous workforce

of both skills and knowledge that will affect food security and national sovereignty. Why would any young person want to work longer hours with less pay than his urban brother does to have markets and government make his wage or retirement unsure?

Ontario's agriculture is not economically viable in its present state today. Canada's claim is to have the safest food in the world. Quality costs. You cannot have a luxury car at a Volkswagen price. Working hard every day to feed your country is rewarding and noble. Coming home to my family with no profit is dishonouring of my skills and contribution to society. I do not want to continue to contribute to a food basket that does not feed my house too.

The criteria used as a measure of the greenbelt's goals were to be economically neutral and science-based. When one considers the issue of science-based, I have a lot to learn about science associated with roads becoming a boundary. In the future, we should be more definitive about terms. If we mean political science, we should say that. If we mean to have roads define boundaries, we could use the term "engineering science." This would help the credibility of these terms of reference to be more clear, especially for the furry natural science that would eventually need to agree to live by these new rocket-science boundaries and not cross them. Why is it incumbent on us to prove that natural features do not exist after your studies and repeated questions are still unanswered?

1500

Any restriction of an area's activity is a lack of freedom or alternatives, which by appraisal definitions makes one area more or less desirable or handicapped than another. With heavier traffic patterns in the near urban areas and restrictions limiting intensive livestock operations, i.e. nutrient management, what offset would there be for any new farmer to want to invest in land that is restricted? There are only two criteria for financing debt serviceability suitable for banks to lend into today: positive cash flow, which I have stated is not happening in agriculture today, and equity financing, which is the mining of assets, a fact that will be further accelerated by the greenbelt's arbitrary action that threatens to make us financially insolvent.

If there is a public need for this tranquil parkland, what cost per acre does the GTA allot for park maintenance? Would this not be similar work and a reference point for compensation to preserve farmland? Freedom equals options; options make dollars. Loss of freedom needs compensation. Remember, a deal has to be perceived to be fair and equitable to all.

Government, you cannot afford to own agriculture, and, in its present state, neither can we. What democratic principle gives government the right to steal our land, our produce or rural Ontario? We are primary food producers and are as necessary to society as the health care sector. The nutritious, high-quality food we produce is the benchmark for food quality and the first building block for this country's successful health care program. As a

result, this greenbelt plan falls short of preserving local food production without long-term market viability and incentive compensation to bring this industry to a place of equal pay for equal work. Heard that somewhere before? It's from the Constitution. It also defines rights. The Constitution was deemed necessary and just to be fair in this democracy we proudly call home.

I thank you for your time.

The Chair: We have less than two minutes. I'm going to give about 45 seconds to each party, and the first party would be the government side.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you very much for your impassioned presentation. You mentioned that you have farms in both the proposed greenbelt and the Oak Ridges moraine, and you're talking about taking away pride of ownership, equity and pensions. From your experience with your farm in the Oak Ridges moraine, is that what's happened? What has happened to the farm value or the land values that you would have with that farm?

Mr. Pearse: It's in an area adjacent to a hamlet. It has no chance of being moved into a highly intensive farm operation because of its proximity to the hamlet. The land base around it is primarily golf courses etc. You can't add on to it to make it a viable farm. It's 169 acres, and that doesn't make it a viable farm today. That land base is approximately 33 miles from our next-closest working land.

The Chair: Thank you. The official opposition.

Mrs. Munro: There has been much discussion today around the issue of agricultural viability. The government has suggested in a number of these conversations that obviously this is an issue that goes beyond the greenbelt. But I think the point we need to understand from your presentation and those of others today is that there are some special issues around agricultural viability in this proposed area. I wondered if there were a couple of others besides those you have identified that you would say really make it a very special issue in this proposed legislation.

Mr. Pearse: Oh, it's a big subject.

The Chair: And you have five seconds to answer.

Mr. Pearse: One of the problems would be employment base. We can't hire people and compete with the wages in other areas out of the viability that's currently available in agriculture today.

The Chair: Ms. Churley.

Ms. Churley: I will allow you to just follow up on that question. I think you really have some things to say about that, so go ahead.

Mr. Pearse: I appreciate that. The other, of course, is traffic patterns. Some of us are facing anywhere from 1,000 to 1,500 cars an hour going by our driveways. How do you get big machinery out on the road safely to work land? We have to work volume in order to come close to being viable, and the risk associated with it is getting to be another big hazard.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Pearse.

HUMBER VALLEY
HERITAGE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

The Chair: Our next delegation is the Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association. Welcome. If you could identify yourself and your organization before you start. When you do begin, you will have 15 minutes. If you use all of your time, there won't be an opportunity for questions, but if you do leave time, everyone will get a chance to speak.

Ms. Joanne Nonnekes: Thank you. My name is Joanne Nonnekes and I'm here this afternoon representing the Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association.

Honourable Chair, members of the standing committee, the Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association requested the opportunity to address you today for three reasons: We want to indicate our support for the proposed legislation contained in Bill 135; we want to suggest the inclusion of a couple of natural areas in the Humber Valley that are aesthetically important and have an ecological relationship with the proposed greenbelt and we feel strongly should be included in the greenbelt; and thirdly, to make a recommendation regarding the review process in the greenbelt legislation.

A group in Bolton, Ontario, created the Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association about 10 years ago. The idea was to plan, create and promote a public recreational hiking trail system in the Humber watershed from Lake Ontario to Palgrave, linking the Bruce Trail and other recreational trails in the watershed to the lakefront. The trail is complete from Palgrave to Bolton, we're working on the section from Bolton to Kleinburg and, from there, we hope to link trails already in place.

But our mission is not only to create and link trails for recreation; it's also to promote ecologically responsible attitudes to the natural environments of the Humber through organized hikes, environmental education along the trails and working with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority on restoration projects. It is this last part of our mission that brings me before you today.

First of all, we want to congratulate the current government for bringing this legislation forward. I had the personal privilege of participating in one of the task force meetings, as well as attending one of the public information sessions, and I'm encouraged by the vision and commitment to natural heritage preservation that is an integral part of this proposed greenbelt plan. I was reading in the Toronto Star recently that critics are strongly advising that we slow down the creation and implementation of the greenbelt, arguing that such an important piece of legislation that affects so many people requires that we take time to get it right. I would submit to you that, while we must take into consideration all the stakeholders in this process, if we really wanted to get it right, we would have had to create the greenbelt years ago. Now we are faced with human impacts that would not have come into play 50 years ago, and irreversible impacts to the natural and urban system. Thus we want to encourage you not to delay, and to continue to move

forward as quickly as possible. As a trail association, we look forward to the increased opportunities that will be created to build exciting trails, promote ecological responsibility and restore natural areas along the northern section of the Humber.

Audio presentation.

Ms. Nonnekes: To introduce my second point, if this will work for me, I am playing you a very short clip of what an April evening sounds like in the Humber Valley. I'll stop it so you can hear me. This is one of the first sounds of spring in the wetlands created by the melting snow and ice within our woodlands. These are the spring mating calls of two species of frogs common to southern Ontario woodlands, the wood frog and the spring peeper. Both species, like many other wetland species, are sensitive to urbanization, requiring not only the wetland for breeding in the spring, but also the associated forest close by for their survival. Currently, you will not hear these sounds in the Humber Valley south of Boyd Park. But you will still hear them in the valley terraces of Boyd Park, one of the areas we would like to see added to the mapping of the greenbelt. By playing this tape, I am not suggesting that we need to protect these two particular species. These amphibians are indicator species. They tell us that the habitat in Boyd Park is still rich enough to support them, along with many other flora and fauna not common further south in the GTA. Where the wood frogs end is also where good water quality ends in the Humber.

1510

I'd like to draw your attention to the first map that I had passed around. It's a map produced by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. You will note that Boyd Park is indicated by the strong pink boundary on the south end. It's actually part of a large complex of forest, river valley and wetlands to the north. It's the southern section of what the TRCA refers to as the "Boyd complex," and it is the only section of the Boyd complex that is not included in the current greenbelt mapping. Yet like its connected lands to the north, it contains a designated area of natural and scientific interest, as defined by the provincial policy statement, and an environmentally significant area, as defined by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

Here I quote from a TRCA staff report:

"TRCA's research indicates that the Pine Valley forest area is one of the most important southerly tracts of habitat within the TRCA jurisdiction, and specifically within the Humber River watershed and natural heritage system. This significant wildlife movement corridor connects the natural areas on the Oak Ridges moraine and Niagara Escarpment to the Lake Ontario shoreline.... Boyd is also an important regional-scale recreational destination for hiking, picnicking, fishing and nature appreciation.... Additionally, Boyd has significant cultural heritage attributes as part of the Carrying Place Trail and containing the remnants of an Iroquois village that dates back to the early 1500s."

The land in Boyd Park is publicly owned and we feel that following the boundary of the natural system here,

instead of the urban boundary at Rutherford Road, would better reflect the relationship it has with the proposed greenbelt and the stated intentions of the greenbelt plan.

Similarly, we would like to encourage you to review for inclusion in the greenbelt plan a second area. Although on first glance this second area, known as the Upland Sandpiper ESA, looks deceptively like a transformer station and hydro corridor, it's actually a surprisingly rich wetland that is reminiscent of the pothole wetlands of the prairies. Virtually all of the shorebird, grassland bird and frog species that breed in the GTA are represented on this single site.

Please refer to the second map I have provided, and this is one of the maps from the greenbelt. It's difficult to see this one, but the area I'm referring to is at the south end of where the greenbelt ends. It's concession 10, lot 29, I think, where the Upland Sandpiper ESA is located. Protecting this ecosystem would involve extending the greenbelt plan south toward Nashville Road.

My last point is in regard to the proposed review process of the greenbelt plan in 10 years. The greenbelt plan as currently proposed includes a provision to review with a possibility for some new areas to be included in the greenbelt and for some areas to be removed, should the arguments be deemed sound. The proviso is that the total greenbelt area may not shrink. While we respect that there may be needs or situations that could warrant the substitution of specific pieces of land in the greenbelt plan, we would like some provision made for the fact that not all green space is equal. In order for the long-term goals of the greenbelt plan to be met, it's important that any substitution of lands be of similar ecological function. Replacing a forest tract, for instance, with a golf course would not maintain the goal of protecting the natural system, yet both functions are considered green space in most planning exercises.

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today, and congratulations on having the courage to take on this important and necessary task.

The Chair: Thank you for offering us not only a show and tell but a hear and tell. That's great. Each party has two minutes, starting with the official opposition.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you very much for the presentation. Certainly, the Boyd conservation area has become one of the great mysteries of the hearings to date. We've had a number of groups that have brought forward, with good science, reasons why Boyd should be included in the greenbelt area. It begs the question as to why was Boyd excluded from the exercise? Some may suggest that it's the finance minister's riding. We hope there's no politics at work, but I'd be much more comfortable if there were a scientific basis or some way to be very clear and transparent about how these particular boundaries came about and then how they will change.

I appreciate your point. You feel very strongly about the issue and you'd like it to move as quickly as possible. The other side of the coin that we hear from deputants who come forward is that they would feel much more comfortable if it were based clearly on a very transparent

public process so that they have their chance to look at the science, and if the science justifies an inclusion, great.

Perhaps there would be an opportunity as well, through an appellate tribunal, to bring cases like Boyd Park. The challenge today is that the only method for appeal is through the minister him- or herself. If you know the minister or you know somebody in their office, if you go to the right fundraiser or event, maybe you'll have your day in court, so to speak, to make that appeal, but a lot of people who don't have those political connections will be left out of the loop.

That's why I'm very sympathetic to the claims that groups bring forward to have some sort of public, transparent process where they can have their day in court based on science, on the boundaries, on designation. Look at areas that have a very good case, like Boyd, like Parkview—we've had other groups like that—or Marcy's Woods in my riding, which I'm very fond of.

But I appreciate your sincerity. I appreciate your point. The Boyd conservation area is one thing we'll keep pressing to see—let's get this based on science. We've certainly heard very compelling evidence that it should be included at these hearings.

The Chair: I don't think there was a question there. Ms. Churley, you have the floor.

Ms. Churley: Your presentation really made me want April to come in a hurry.

I want to refer briefly to Boyd Park as well. I'm wondering if you had an opportunity to ask the member Mr. Sorbara or any of the Liberals in this case what the justification is for leaving it out. None of us understand why it's left out, and I assume you must have been given some reason.

Ms. Nonnekes: I have asked the question, and we have asked the question. My understanding is that Rutherford Road is the urban boundary. Anything south of Rutherford Road was not included.

Ms. Churley: And that's it.

Ms. Nonnekes: And that was it. So it's an urban boundary, not a natural boundary. Science shows that the natural boundary—and this is all publicly owned land. This is not land that would otherwise get developed. It's publicly owned land; it's a park. But we would like to see it get the added protection of the greenbelt.

Ms. Churley: So there is science to back it up. This is kind of a weird one, because on one hand there are accusations that this has not been done by using science, but in this case the science is very clear that it should be included. I would think that you have all that evidence.

Ms. Nonnekes: The Ministry of Natural Resources did the studies to put the forest into an area of natural and scientific interest, which protects it under the provincial policy statement. It is a protected woodland-wetland.

Ms. Churley: What do you think is going on here? Where do you want to go? All you want to do is make sure it gets included, right? That's your message today.

Ms. Nonnekes: My understanding was that Rutherford Road was the urban boundary. In this case, I think

we ought to pay more attention to the natural boundary than to the urban boundary. Ecologically, it makes sense.

Ms. Churley: The scientific consensus now, and in fact there is quite a bit of consensus, is that the problem with the greenbelt is that it doesn't go far enough and that the boundaries need to be expanded in order for it to work, for it to stop urban sprawl and protect agricultural land, that otherwise you're going to have a lot of leapfrog development.

The Chair: Your time has expired. From the government side?

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you for the nice presentation. It certainly made me feel like I was on the farm for a bit there.

I got the sense from the earlier comments in your presentation that you do want some speed for the passage of this legislation, that you're concerned about slowing it down. You mentioned that we are maybe already too late in some respects. Could you expand on that, please?

Ms. Nonnekes: From my personal experience—I live in the Humber Valley; I live in the Boyd Park area. The area to the east of Boyd Park was also an area of natural and scientific interest. It is now a subdivision. As time moves on, if we don't put the protective legislation in place, we're going to lose more and more of these very special natural areas, and as we lose them, we lose the opportunity to have relationships with them. There is a possibility, I think, for urban-natural interaction. We can't do it without protecting natural systems.

The Chair: You have another minute left if you want to use it.

1520

Mrs. Van Bommel: Oh, that's wonderful. Later in your presentation, you talked about the review period in 10 years. Your recommendation is that if there is, for whatever reason, a need to replace parts of it, it should be in a similar type of environment. Yesterday, we heard from a delegation that said that not only should it be of the same sort of system but it should even be within the local municipality or locality, so if there is a bit of give and take, it doesn't suddenly shift around in any major way. How do you feel about that?

Ms. Nonnekes: Well, I would agree with that in the sense that wildlife and natural areas don't pay much attention to urban boundaries. You have to have some place for the wildlife etc. to go as well. So if you have the opportunity, in a particular natural system, to say, "We really have to take this piece over here, but if we add the section on this side, it might have less impact"—but overall, personally I've seen too much green space allocated to things that are not ecologically of the same quality as, say, a very biodiverse forest ecosystem, valley land. When we allow intrusion into the very sensitive areas, you can't replace that. So my preference would be don't even go there, but if you have—

The Chair: Your time is up, but thank you very much for your passion.

941807 ONTARIO

The Chair: Our next delegation, if they're in the room, is 941807 Ontario Ltd. Are they here? Great. Good afternoon, sir. Please identify yourself and the group you're speaking for. When you begin, you will have 15 minutes. Should you use all of the time, there won't be time for questions at the end, but if there is time, we'll get everybody to ask you questions about your statement. Welcome.

Mr. Gerald Hasiuk: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank you for the opportunity to come here this afternoon, even though we're very, very late. We came from eastern Ontario—

The Chair: Can you identify yourself at the beginning, please?

Mr. Hasiuk: Sorry, I was just getting to it. My name is Gerry Hasiuk. I am an owner of lot 27 and 28 in the original Darlington township, now Clarington, in the region of Durham.

I'm objecting to Bill 135 for several reasons. First of all, being in business for 45 years, I have learned the assets of common sense, and I'm here today because of common sense. I'm going to talk about the area consisting of Town Line to Taunton Road, across Taunton Road to Solina Road, and south. In the middle of this area is Courtice Road.

I'm going to start with the area coming up Town Line. On the west side of this area is the most concentrated housing that you're going to see anywhere in Canada. You come up this area and Town Line splits it like a piece of cake. On the east side of this Town Line, you have put this into an area that's not to be developed. You come up to Taunton Road and Town Line and you've got this concentration of houses to the west and the east. Coming from this area, I might add that some of the best land in the whole region has already been put into houses, and if you go across Taunton Road, marginal land is sitting there being put into the greenbelt. Go across Taunton Road, and again, you've got a little bit of good land along Taunton Road on the south side, until you come to the area of Mitchell's Corners. I really don't understand what the greenbelt is planning here.

We've had an area here called Mitchell's Corners, which is on the south side of Taunton Road, of Zion Road. This hamlet of hundreds of homes has been here for at least 50 years. This is in the greenbelt. I don't understand why this is in the greenbelt.

We go across to Courtice Road and we have two farms there that are, I'm sure, class 1 land, but then again, you start with another group of houses until you come to Solina Road. When you get to Solina Road and go south, this is all marginal land. This is not land that is going to be of any use or produce a great deal of food. This is the kind of planning I don't understand. It goes all the way down to Highway 2 or to Pebblestone, Nash, all the way down. It's got a concentration of houses with sewers, without sewers and without water. So it's got wells and septic systems.

It brings the Courtice Road area into huge question. There is now a new sewage plant and a new water plant has been granted for that Courtice area at the lake. There's only one way you can go, and that's straight north. I don't understand why that area has been put into greenbelt when there's a sewage plant and a water plant going into Lake Ontario. It's obviously got to come north, and when you come north, you come up to the Courtice crossing area. You've got a mall there, a GM dealership. You go a little bit north and you've got a complete Courtice area there that is for skating, then you've got the high school. You come up to Pebblestone Road; you've got concentrated houses all the way up until you come to Pebblestone Road, which is two concessions north, and that is the Monsignor Cleary church, hall and school, and that's in greenbelt. For the life of me, I don't understand why that is in greenbelt. Now, maybe when you decided to put this bill before the House, the septic and the water plant were not conceived, but they are now. It's going to happen in the next years. It may not happen in 2005, but it is going to happen.

It's my consensus that the whole area, going right up to Taunton Road from Town Line to Solina Road and south, should be taken out of the greenbelt. A great deal of time and energy has been spent on this area. I've got the report from Clarington. Some of the areas they're talking about—they're talking about the Lake Iroquois shoreline. Well, the Lake Iroquois shoreline is basically talking about the same boundaries as I'm giving you here this afternoon. There are two different shorelines. The top shoreline is exactly what I'm talking about, from the Town Line to Solina Road and south. When they talk about the Iroquois shoreline, they talk about gravel deposits, about the recipient of the rain and the wall, but there's something that they're forgetting here, and that is that all this aggregate at the base of the shoreline of the old Iroquois Lake is long gone. Fifty years ago they took the gravel from these areas and built the General Motors plant; 30 years ago they took the gravel and built the 401 with it. It's all gone. So there's no detrimental value to having the shoreline when all the material was taken away 50 years ago.

For those reasons, and not those reasons alone, I think this whole map needs to be looked at, and looked at very seriously.

But being in the trucking business and having 500 units that run in Canada and the United States, I'm going to come up with the other issue, and that is the 407. Highway 407 hasn't moved an inch in the last three years. It's unbelievable that the greenbelt runs from where the 407 is stopped right through to 35/115. I mean, this is brilliant. I'm surprised the government came up with it. They are going to be able to acquire land for the 407 for, instead of \$10,000 an acre, \$500 to \$1,000 an acre because it's going to be agricultural land. I can't believe this. It's unbelievable. They are going to really solve the traffic problem—and anybody today can get on the 401 and you get to Waverley Road, bang, it's stopped. There is no sense in building houses if people can't go to

work. Right now, you stop at Waverley Road. You're there and you're stopped.

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I live in Colborne, Ontario. I'll give you a fact. I can get to Syracuse, New York, more quickly than I can get to Dixie Road and 401. It's got to be addressed. The traffic has got to be addressed. I think it's brilliant, government, that you've put this greenbelt in so you can put the highway in and you can get the people to work and solve a huge problem. But the only problem is that when you buy all this land for the new 407 and the arterial going from Courtice up to the 407, you're going to get it for nothing. I hope you have a lot of sandpaper to give the owners to dry the tears, because in 10 years you can slip this right back, the 407 is through, people can get to work, everybody is happy.

That's my presentation.

Applause.

The Chair: Thank you, sir. May I remind the audience that you're in attendance at a public hearing. I do not want any more clapping or responding to the delegations, otherwise I'll clear the room.

Each party has two minutes to respond. First up is Ms. Churley.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much for your presentation. You've looked at the plan and talked about it from your perspective. Would you say, if the greenbelt goes ahead, that more lands need to be included? The way it is structured right now, for no apparent reason, a lot of the land it has been scientifically proven should be part of this has been left out. Do you have a comment on that? We keep hearing about the leapfrogging, which would in fact require more highways. There are a whole bunch of issues around putting some in and putting others out and then developers buying up the land and leaping over the designated land.

Mr. Hasiuk: I'm going to come up with the answer again: common sense. You don't know how well you have it here. I come from a community called Colborne. We've got an industrial park right on the 401. It hasn't had a new building in 20 years. My member here, from Grafton—same thing. He's got an industrial park. There hasn't been a new building built there for 20 years. It is so bad in Colborne that the town is building the housing themselves. That's a fact. They sold the PUC, bought the land and they're building houses so they can bring what you people are so fortunate to have. You know, if you throw too much water on your fire, you may put it out.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Our next speaker is from the government side; two minutes.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you, sir, for your very enthusiastic presentation. You mentioned initially that you're in business. Can I ask what kind of business you're in?

Mr. Hasiuk: I'm in tractor-trailer leasing, the large units. We lease them all over to major factories, 40 different companies in Canada that lease them.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Where is this business located?

Mr. Hasiuk: It's located at the corner of Courtice Road and Baseline. I have another four acres one mile west of the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop, where I keep my containers; we also have a container business. We have over 400 containers that we lease to construction, to school boards and whatever. Then in Colborne, I have 55,000 square feet that we use as shops to do all our repair and certifications for our tractors and trailers.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Does the greenbelt legislation impact that business in any way?

Mr. Hasiuk: No. It impacts the property that I have on Courtice Road.

Mrs. Van Bommel: OK. You talked about marginal lands. I'm just curious as to how you would define "marginal." What makes it marginal land?

Mr. Hasiuk: The way to treat marginal land is look at the kinds of trees it's growing. If it's growing hardwood trees, maples—for these little hardwood trees, it takes a very good kind of land. If it's growing cedar, that's another thing. If it's growing nothing but scrub, then you know that's of poor quality. It could still be farmed, but it would take an excessive amount of fertilizer.

Mrs. Van Bommel: I quite agree. My father-in-law always used to say that you could tell a good farm by the trees that were growing on it. So there's no question that trees certainly do—

Mr. Hasiuk: Yes.

Mrs. Van Bommel: But you really do feel that this is marginal land, then.

Mr. Hasiuk: Yes, very marginal.

Mrs. Van Bommel: OK. Thank you very much.

The Chair: The official opposition; Mr. Hudak.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you, Mr. Hasiuk, for the impassioned presentation. You put a lot of thought into it, obviously. Others have brought forward similar points. Some of the fatal flaws in this bill are, as you said, there is no infrastructure plan, the future transportation corridors, for example, the hydro corridors. Where is the growth going to be? The answer we get is, "Minister Caplan is working on that," but their own panel recommended they proceed hand in hand. Waiting for that report is like waiting for the Leafs to win the Stanley Cup, you know, "We'll get it next year. It's coming." We ain't seen it in my lifetime, anyway.

The other point you make about Mitchell's—and my colleague John O'Toole has brought up this concern in our discussions as well. We have to make sure that the areas in the greenbelt are the appropriate areas. Other groups have brought forward areas that probably should be included, and other areas are included, from what we hear, without scientific justification. That's why we're calling it the greenbotch plan, because it's been so badly implemented.

What's your advice to the committee? How can we get out of this? How can we rectify some of the situations that you bring up? What needs to be fixed, or do you suggest that we just scrap the whole process?

Mr. Hasiuk: I don't think the whole process should be scrapped. I think there are some very strong farm

feelings. The farm community needs to be saved. There is a wilderness that needs to be protected so people can enjoy it. But I'm going to fall back on what's done me good for 40 years, and that's common sense. When you've got a sewage and water treatment plant and it's coming right up—it can't go south; that's Lake Ontario.

I'm saying that it needs to be looked at. I think adjustments need to be made. That's my answer.

The Chair: Thank you, sir, for your delegation. We appreciate your coming out today.

DON CHAPMAN

The Chair: Our next delegation is Don Chapman. Good afternoon. If you could introduce yourself and give the address of your farm, you will have 10 minutes to speak.

Mr. Don Chapman: My name is Don Chapman. I farm in the Queensville area. My street address is 21413 Leslie Street. Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity of coming to speak to you about my feelings on the consequences for farmers if Bill 135 comes into effect.

I have been in the farming business for over 40 years. I started in 1964, when I was 19 years old. In the early days, we grew cash crops as well as vegetables, which were sold in Canada and in the US. From those early beginnings of 200 to 300 acres, our farm has grown to over 2,000. Some 900 to 1,000 acres of this land are in vegetable production; the balance is in hay and grain crops.

Our farm is fully HACCP. Every part of our farming operation is controlled under HACCP. Besides the farm, we own and operate a vegetable processing plant, which handles all the produce from our farms and other growers' farms in the area. We own and operate a small trucking company, which handles all the delivering of our products throughout Canada and the US. We're licensed in all 48 states.

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Along with my wife and myself, we have five family members engaged in the business. In addition, we have 35 full-time, year-round employees who depend on our company for their day-to-day living. During the first 25 years of my farming background, we were very profitable, and that's basically what got us started. Over the last 15 years, we have seen costs escalate drastically, to the point now that on some crops, the cost of production has exceeded the revenue we receive for the product.

In the past, farmland has always increased in value, so if you experienced a bad year in any given year—and that has always happened—your equity wouldn't be brought into question because land was slowly increasing in value. So you were kept in a fairly strong business position.

As I see it, there are two distinct issues at play here today. The first thing is land use. I do believe in the preservation of farmland. I've got two young sons and a son-in-law in my business who will probably want to

carry on our farming and processing business. But I believe that if the government decides to pass Bill 135, it will depreciate the value of the farms. I feel certain that the real farmer—and I mean the farmer who makes his living from the farm, not lifestyle farmers—must be compensated for the loss of value of his property if this bill is brought through.

The second point is the profitability of the farm business. Although these seem like two separate issues, they are directly connected. One of the best stewards of our Ontario farmland is our Ontario farmer. He looks at the land with as much pride as he does his children and his grandchildren. Selling land to a speculator, to him, is almost as bad as if you were to sell one of your own kids. It's something that no farmer wants to do, nor should he be placed in a position that he has to. When there is no chance, however, to make a profitable business plan, selling becomes an option. If you can't show the bank or whatever your lending institution is that you're going to be profitable this year, they're not going to lend you the money, and your only option, your last option, is to sell out and move on.

If we could go back to the early years when I started and was profitable, young people today would be able to start farming as I did, and the greenbelt legislation would not be needed. If Bill 135 passes, farmers will see their land values drop by millions of dollars. There isn't a farmer in Ontario today who doesn't need to borrow money for operating costs, to purchase capital items or to purchase land. If land values drop, the farmers will be in an equity crunch. Lending institutions will stop lending money to farmers and will begin to call in existing loans, forcing the producer out of business.

The Ontario farm economy generates \$8 billion in annual revenue for the economy of Ontario. As these products are processed and delivered to the end user in whatever form they take, that \$8 billion is multiplied seven times to amount to approximately \$56 billion for the Ontario economy. This creates hundreds and thousands of jobs at every step along the way.

In summing up, I do not believe the government has a moral right to create a greenbelt without compensating the farmers who make their living from the land. If the bill is passed, it will take away a farmer's pension plan. No government would ever try to take a pension plan away from a teacher, a civil servant, a fireman or anyone else. Why is a farmer any different?

If a person owns a house and lot in the GTA somewhere and they bought that house and lot in the past few years for \$300,000, would the government come along and say, "I'm sorry. Housing is getting too expensive. Your house is now going to be valued at \$200,000"? If that happened, there would be a hell of an outcry, and maybe even a revolution. If Bill 135 is passed, exactly the same thing is going to happen to farmers. I don't know, but I'm hoping—it doesn't seem like anybody has thought of that consequence.

I believe the bill will affect the farmer's ability to obtain credit.

Within two to three miles of my farm, where there is no greenbelt, as the crow flies, there are speculators driving up and down the concession roads buying every farm they can lay their hands on between Barrie and Bradford. I can see that land right out the living room window of my own farm. This will cause a leapfrogging scenario. The traffic moving from the Bradford-Barrie area going to Toronto will cause more congestion on the roads, more pollution and all kinds of problems that go along with that.

The final and most important thing I would like to say today is that if a farmer was able to run a profitable business today, as he was in the early days when I started, there would be no need for greenbelt legislation. The farming community would be a vibrant and healthy industry, producing safe and healthy food for ourselves and the world in general at a very fair price.

One thought that came to me while I was sitting back there listening was that farmers are at greater risk of being extinct than those frogs that were sitting here chirping away a few minutes ago.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chapman. You only have 30 seconds left. Did you want to summarize?

Mr. Chapman: That's pretty well it.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your delegation. We appreciate you coming and your thoughtful presentation.

CALEDON COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE

The Chair: Our next delegation is the Caledon Countryside Alliance. Good afternoon. If you could identify yourself for Hansard, the group you represent and who will be speaking today, and when you begin, you'll have 15 minutes.

Ms. Karen Hutchinson: My name is Karen Hutchinson from the Caledon Countryside Alliance. On my left is Nicola Ross, who was the 2004 Caledon Environmentalist of the Year. She has a long history in the environmental community in Caledon and also as a writer.

Honourable Chair, standing committee, it's a great pleasure that we're here today to represent our beloved Caledon. Before I start, I just want to ask how many people know where Caledon is. How many people have been to Caledon? Good. OK. So you know where we are. We're at the north end of the region of Peel. The visual that I want to leave you with is that in the middle of Caledon is a spot where the Oak Ridges moraine and the Niagara Escarpment meet. It's a pretty unique environment.

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In order to build on Caledon's successes, a group of local residents representing both the environmental and agricultural communities have come together to agree on practical solutions for the greenbelt plan in Caledon. Our overwhelming objective with these comments is to ensure that this committee understands Caledon's unique situation and the proactive steps we have already taken to

date as a community: steps to ensure that we steward our world-class natural areas like the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges moraine, the Peel plain and our four watersheds; steps to be on the leading edge of planning policy with our trinodal growth strategy to ensure that we have sustainable balanced growth that our town can manage; steps to ensure aggregate extraction is necessary and environmentally sustainable; steps to bring all groups to the table, at the town's expense, to develop our comprehensive planning policies like OPA 161 and 179.

At this point it is imperative not only for our community, but for all communities in Ontario, to know that community consultations and local solutions will be taken into consideration at the provincial level. Ontario residents need to know that local planning and local community input are important and will continue to shape the policies of the villages, towns and cities they live in.

Caledon has put municipal time and money into developing official plan policies. Residents, businesses and other stakeholders have made similar commitments to the process. Caledon has been rewarded for this hard work with numerous awards, including that of Ontario's greenest town. We want to continue this tradition of high achievement and setting the benchmark. Caledon residents care about what happens to our town now and in the future. We ask that the greenbelt plan and legislation, Bill 135, honour the policies that have already been approved or are in the approval process by the provincial government.

On the greenbelt plan legislation, we have the following general recommendations.

“Conflicts with Greenbelt Plan:

“8. Despite any other act, the greenbelt plan prevails in the case of a conflict between the greenbelt plan and,

“(a) an official plan;

“(b) a zoning bylaw; or

“(c) a policy statement issued under section 3 of the Planning Act.”

This should be amended to take into account aggregate and agricultural policies that are more restrictive, such as OPA 161 and OPA 179 in Caledon. This will allow for municipalities to have stricter policies in existence that are approved by the provincial government.

Section 5, objective (d), “to recognize the critical importance of the agricultural sector to the regional economy,” fundamentally needs to address the issue of agricultural viability as it pertains to a secure food supply and the need to maintain stable, prosperous regional economies in rural areas. Food security and food supply must be considered a basic need, on par with a safe water supply. And just as we would not consider importing water from California to be a secure water supply, this should not be an acceptable option for our food.

To build on the greenbelt plan, the province of Ontario needs to develop a thoughtfully crafted strategic plan that protects agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands in a way that successfully integrates the three pillars of sustainable development: environmental protection, eco-

nomics sustainability and social equity. This strategy should reflect the complex issues involved, and must involve a real partnership between the government, affected municipalities, environmental and agricultural communities and other stakeholders rather than rely on traditional public consultation.

Just as the provincial government must demonstrate need before building new infrastructure within the greenbelt, aggregate producers should demonstrate need before opening new operations or expanding existing ones.

Now, we have four separate recommendations that pertain specifically to the town of Caledon.

(1) We ask that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs allow Caledon's resource policy, OPA 161, to be the minimum bar for the development of aggregates in Caledon.

(2) The Ministry of Municipal Affairs should allow Caledon's agricultural and rural policy, OPA 179, to be the minimum bar governing agriculture in Caledon.

(3) The Ministry of Municipal Affairs should take all of the Peel plain out of the greenbelt and use the southern boundaries of the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges moraine as the southern boundary for the greenbelt in Caledon. These boundaries should hold, with the exception of lands reserved for natural heritage corridors for the Credit and Humber Rivers, the Etobicoke and Mimico Creeks and other such deemed sensitive areas.

(4) The Ministry of Municipal Affairs should designate Caledon as a special pilot study area. Caledon is an ideal place to establish baselines and a monitoring program for our agriculture, aggregate and growth management strategies. In addition, innovative ideas to increase agricultural sustainability and viability should be employed using information and recommendations from the GTA agricultural action working plan. Various stakeholders throughout Caledon have already agreed to be part of this monitoring process.

What we've found in Caledon is that the greenbelt has actually been a very divisive process for our agricultural and environmental communities, much to our sadness, because we have tried to work together in the past on policies and plans. So what we've learned from our agricultural community and from an environmental sense is that when it comes to the Peel plain, the greenbelt is fragmenting it. Either it all has to be in or it all has to be out in terms of the Peel plain in order for us to have a fair chance at agriculture. We're recommending that it all be out and that the southern boundary of the greenbelt should be the southern boundary of the Oak Ridges moraine and the Niagara Escarpment.

We have worked, as I said, in our community to look at how we could monitor that, how we could set up policies. We already have a proven track record of setting up policies and being very effective in doing that. We would like to be granted certain pilot status to do a monitoring project which would look at all of these matters.

I'm sure you have lots of questions. I just have one final note: A couple of months ago, Debbie Crandall, who

is probably best known for her work with STORM on the Oak Ridges moraine and who actually grew up on the Oak Ridges moraine and still lives on the Oak Ridges moraine, Nicola Ross, who grew up on the Niagara Escarpment and still lives on the Niagara Escarpment, and myself, Karen Hutchinson, who grew up on the Peel plain and I still live on the Peel plain, came together to say, “What can we do for our community?” I think you’ll find throughout Caledon there are a lot of people who are very committed to Caledon, very committed to making a lot of things work, and you’ll find us very receptive to going that extra mile and making things work as evident in our Greenest Town designation. Thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: Thank you. We have two minutes per party, and the first speaker will be the government.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you for your presentation. Would you just give us some more information about OPA 161 and 179? Would you tell me what they say?

Ms. Nicola Ross: OPA 161 is our aggregate policies. In Caledon we have a huge amount of aggregate resource. Consequently, a number of years ago we went through a very prolonged study process that brought together the municipal government, the aggregate industry and a number of different stakeholders and came up with a plan that was really kind of a “built in Caledon.” It’s a little more restrictive and there are some requirements in terms of priorities on what aggregates can be extracted when, and there are a few other requirements that are a little more stringent than what currently exists in the provincial policy statement.

Because we spent so much time and effort that was agreed to by all parties, including the aggregate industry, we feel that those policies work for Caledon and we would like to see them approved, even though they are more restrictive than what currently appears in the greenbelt plan. We’d be willing to do a monitoring program in some way to demonstrate how these are working relative to policies in other places.

Mrs. Van Bommel: And 179?

Ms. Hutchinson: OPA 179 is the agriculture policy. Again, a lot of stakeholders were brought to the table to figure out how we could address the issue of viability in agriculture in the town of Caledon. The bill was passed by Caledon council on October 6, 2003. It has since been stayed at the OMB while the greenbelt process is going on. Basically what it does is help agriculture to expand to include stores, perhaps, that could be on the farm, farm stores, and entertainment—some ways of actually adding to the income stream of the farming community.

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The Chair: Thank you. We have to go to the government side. Mr. Hudak?

Mr. Hudak: Mrs. Munro had a question. I just want to say it’s good to see you again, Karen. I know Debbé, as well, played a big role on the Crombie panel for the Oak Ridges moraine legislation. Pass on my regards.

I’ve enjoyed my trips to Caledon. I want to congratulate you on all the work that’s been done by the mayor,

council and groups like yourselves in forging this type of report.

Mrs. Munro: You made reference on page 3 of your paper with regard to the GTA’s agricultural action working plan. We had a presentation earlier today that outlined that. I had the opportunity to go to a symposium about a year ago when that work was being done.

So much has been raised around the issue of agricultural viability. Obviously, that is the key to what’s driving this GTA agricultural plan. I wondered, though, if you could tell us if you’ve had experience at either the Ministry of Municipal Affairs or of Agriculture in terms of feeling that these ministers and ministries are listening and do understand the importance of this action plan that has been put together.

Ms. Hutchinson: I was also at that symposium day. I don’t have a lot of experience in taking it to the ministry and dealing with it at the ministry level. My experience would be more at promoting the local food economy, which that does address, and more working with organizations like the Toronto Food Policy Council. As I said, I haven’t had a lot of experience with the ministry.

Ms. Ross: If I can add to that briefly, in the meeting we had on the weekend with the mayor and councillors, they were disappointed with some of the action they’re getting at the provincial and federal levels. One of the good things that came out of this is that we are sitting down as environmentalists and speaking to our agricultural community. There’s been some tension, so I think some good has come out of this whole greenbelt plan.

The Chair: Thank you. Ms. Churley, you have the last two minutes.

Ms. Churley: I too want to congratulate you both and Caledon for all the hard work and the achievements you’ve made. I do have some concerns, and I understand where you’re coming from about not wanting to undo all of that good work that you did, but the committee has heard from, and will hear from, other community groups who are making the case that they’re unique and doing good work. The concern is, once you go down that road—the leadership the province must take in order to make sure that we have consistency across the province. How would you deal with that?

Ms. Ross: If I could make a quick comment, one of the things Caledon has done, because of some of the changes in the planning policy—our planning department has 32 people in it, in the town of Caledon, and with 50,000 people that’s a huge planning effort. With the efforts we’ve made, we’re a long way advanced compared to some other communities. We’ve just put the investment in.

Yes, you can’t do the same thing for everybody, but if you’re going to try some different things, we’d be a good place to do it.

Ms. Hutchinson: I think one of the figures that came out on the weekend was that our aggregate policy was \$3 million of Caledon taxpayers’ money, which we put to that and felt that it was important for our town. So I think that Caledon is one of those communities, as Nicola said,

that has a proven track record of caring and stepping up to get the job done.

Ms. Churley: That could, over time, change down the road, I suppose. I really do understand what you're trying to say, but there's still that whole issue of how does one determine, once you're trying to bring in—well, right now it's only GTA-related—a consistent plan that applies to everybody within a certain area—

Ms. Ross: But we're asking for policies that are more restrictive, not less restrictive.

Ms. Churley: I understand that, and we need to. In fact, I will be putting forward an amendment that will move the greenbelt too, looking at going to best practices and having that take precedence over the less environmentally sound. That's an important point, and I know what you're getting at. It's really critical that best practice takes precedence. There might be other ways of going about it.

The Chair: Thank you very much, ladies, for your delegation. Our time has expired. Thank you for coming.

DUFFIN CAPITAL CORP.

The Chair: Our next delegation is the Duffin Capital Corp. Welcome. If you could identify yourself, the organization you speak for and who the speakers will be today for Hansard, and when you begin, you will have 15 minutes. Should you use all of your time, there won't be any time for questions afterwards, but if you don't, there will be an opportunity for all three parties to ask questions.

Mr. Mark Flowers: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Mark Flowers. I'm a lawyer and I represent Duffin Capital Corp. Duffin Capital Corp. is a member of the West Duffins Landowners Group. It's a landowner in the Cherrywood area of the city of Pickering, sometimes also referred to as the Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve.

The Chair: Are you both going to be speaking today?

Mr. Flowers: No.

I hope each of you has a package, a Cerlox-bound book and then some maps. The front map shows the red-hatched area. That is, in fact, what is referred to as the Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve. The Cherrywood is the Pickering portion.

Although I realize that the hearing today concerns Bill 135, I'd actually like to start my presentation by quoting the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, based on remarks he made to the Legislature when he introduced Bill 26 back in December 2003. That, of course, is the Strong Communities (Planning Amendment) Act. At that time, the minister spoke of the need to "put the ability to guide urban development back into the hands of locally elected decision-makers"; he spoke of the need to "ensure that the will of the people of Ontario ... is respected"; and he spoke of the need to "make government work for the people by making the planning process more open and transparent." I can say, having reviewed

Bill 135, that these principles seem to have been forgotten.

Rather than allowing locally elected decision-makers to guide urban development in their communities, Bill 135 centralizes planning decision-making powers at Queen's Park. Rather than respecting the will of the people of Ontario and their rights, Bill 135 proposes to eliminate many fundamental property and due process rights. Finally, rather than making the planning process more open and transparent, Bill 135, in fact, does not impose any accountability on the government to properly justify what are clearly profound land use planning decisions.

On the first point, the centralization of decision-making, Bill 135 makes no provision to recognize and respect long-term growth planning exercises that are currently being undertaken by various municipalities in the GTA. As many of you will know, the city of Pickering has been carrying out a comprehensive growth management study of the Cherrywood and Seaton areas in the city of Pickering since 2002. That study is the kind of municipal growth planning that you would expect the province to encourage, one that is multi-disciplinary, is long-term and strategic in its thinking, and is based on an open and transparent process.

The results of that study thus far—right now, it's going into phase 3 of a three-phase process—have determined that the city of Pickering does not have sufficient lands within its existing urban boundary to accommodate the population growth that is expected over the coming decades. Therefore, it needs to expand the urban boundary, and it has determined that Cherrywood represents a logical and appropriate location for that new urban community.

City planning staff reviewed the work of the city's consulting team. They came to the same conclusion. Accordingly, city council passed a bylaw in December to amend its official plan to bring a portion of the Cherrywood lands within its urban boundary. I'd just like to stop there and be absolutely clear: The city is not proposing to pave over the entire Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve. I think there is a myth out there that that is the case. On the contrary, the city is only proposing to allow development in roughly the southern half, while maintaining a very large countryside area to the north, particularly around the hamlet of Whitevale. In fact, the city's plan, if you look at it, provides a significantly larger buffer for Whitevale than a plan that has been recently prepared by the province under the Ontario Planning and Development Act.

Notwithstanding the work of the city through its growth management study, the province is proposing to include all of the Cherrywood lands in the greenbelt, and that's against the express wishes of the locally elected decision-makers. Our recommendation, therefore, is that the government heed the words of the minister and allow the locally elected decision-makers to guide urban development in this community.

Turning to the issue of respect for the rights of individuals, I'm sure many of you will know that the current planning system recognizes the rights of all individuals—that's both proponents and opponents alike—to participate in the planning process, and also that they have certain procedural safeguards to ensure their rights are protected.

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By contrast, Bill 135 treats these rights as though they were privileges, to be taken away at the whim of government. I'm speaking, of course, of the absence of any right of appeal, the inability to make an application to amend the greenbelt, the elimination of procedural safeguards that would exist under the Statutory Powers Procedure Act and the inability to challenge the government's actions in court or to claim compensation, and those are just to name a few. I'm sure you will hear a number of others over these four days asking for such things as a legitimate appeals process and the ability to apply for an amendment to the plan even if you don't have the title "Minister" before your name. We certainly would echo those recommendations.

That brings me to my third point, where I'm going to spend most of my time, and that is transparency in the planning process. I can say that as a lawyer representing many development proponents, I'm certainly familiar with the expectation that for any large-scale land use planning process there needs to be a significant amount of scientific and technical work completed at the outset that will justify what is proposed, and that this work will then be subject to intense scrutiny from all other stakeholders and, if necessary, defended in a public, open forum. Naturally, I would have expected that the government would subject itself to that same standard of analysis, particularly in the case of the greenbelt, because it's making very profound, long-term land use planning decisions on lands that it doesn't even own.

If one simply looks at the draft greenbelt plan, there may be reason for some optimism, as the introduction seems to set out the criteria by which the boundaries of the greenbelt will be established. It states that the protected countryside lands in the plan have been identified through a combination of three factors: (1) the best science available, (2) a consideration of existing and future patterns of urbanization, and (3) local knowledge and advice. Those criteria leave a number of questions unanswered, of course, but at least it's a start, or at least so we thought.

The reality is that these are nothing more than words, and Cherrywood is perhaps the best example to demonstrate why this is so. Starting with "local knowledge and advice," I've already mentioned that the city has spent the last three years doing a growth management study determining where future growth in Pickering ought to go. Meanwhile, the province's mapping shows all of Cherrywood within the greenbelt. Then, looking at "a consideration of existing and future patterns of urbanization," again, the growth management study looked at that issue and determined that Cherrywood was a logical

and appropriate location for future growth. You don't even need to take the city's word for it. You can see, based on this map, that all of the yellow area is either developed area or to be developed.

Seaton, of course, which is currently undergoing a planning exercise to be developed, just north of Cherrywood, is the federal airport lands, and you probably heard the announcement in the fall by the GTAA proposing an airport on those lands.

If you prohibit development in Cherrywood, that doesn't curb population growth. Durham region is expected to almost double its population in the next 25 years, from a little over 500,000 to almost a million. The issue then is not whether Durham is going to grow but in fact where it's going to grow and where that growth ought to be directed. We suggest that that growth ought to be directed to Cherrywood. It represents the lands most adjacent to the existing built-up area where there are significant services already in place. That is in accordance with Smart Growth.

But the reality is that the province seems to envision something very different. If you look at the second map, this is an excerpt from the Durham region official plan. The area labelled on this map "alternative candidate area"—that's what we've put on; it's not part of the Durham official plan—is an area north of the hamlet of Greenwood, still in the city of Pickering. Those lands have been excluded from the greenbelt. They've also been identified in the Places to Grow document as a potential future growth area, notwithstanding that, as you'll probably see if you look at the legend, they are designated in the official plan as a permanent agricultural preserve. They represent a large, contiguous area of agricultural land. They're sandwiched between the Oak Ridges moraine and a large open space to the south, and they are far more removed than Cherrywood is from existing built-up areas and servicing infrastructure.

Just on the issue of servicing, Cherrywood is already well served by transportation facilities. The red line on this map represents the YDSS, which is the major trunk sewer system that traverses the southern boundary of the lands.

On the issue of servicing, there's a letter from Mayor Hazel McCallion in the Cerlox-bound book. It's just before the maps. In that letter, Mayor McCallion was responding to the suggestion that the Smart Growth panel—of course, she was the chair of the Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel—supported the province's decision to restrict development in the agricultural preserve. In fact, she confirmed that, on the contrary, the Smart Growth panel had "strongly recommended ... that development occur where the infrastructure is either already present or close by." The report, which I'm leaving you, is prepared by Stantec, a well-known engineering firm, and it confirms that there is excellent servicing capability in Cherrywood.

That brings us to the last criterion for inclusion in the draft greenbelt plan, and that is "the best science available." Given that the greenbelt seems to focus on the pro-

tection of agricultural land and the natural environment, I thought that's where I'd start.

On the issue of natural heritage features, Cherrywood has been studied extensively and found to contain no provincially or regionally significant environmental features.

On the issue of agriculture, recent agricultural studies that have been carried out by both the city of Pickering, through its growth management study, and by our client's consulting team, or at least the West Duffins Landowners Group team, come to the same conclusion: Cherrywood represents an area of low agricultural viability and it's of low agricultural priority. These conclusions are the result of a number of factors, not the least of which are a lack of agricultural support services, fragmentation, declining investment in farm buildings and equipment, isolation from other agricultural areas, and of course land use conflicts with all the development you see going on around it.

We suggest that the fact that the province's own study team in Seaton and Cherrywood has confirmed that some form of financial support would be required to ensure the viability of the Cherrywood lands for long-term agriculture speaks volumes about the merits of this ill-considered plan to maintain the entirety of these lands in agriculture. That conclusion should really come as no surprise. You will see that I've also included in the materials a letter from the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture to Ms. Maria Van Bommel, dated June 22. You will see that in the first paragraph it says:

"At that meeting," which they recently had, "you also sought our views on the Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve...."

"Frankly, the agricultural communities and farm businesses in this area were emasculated when the Pickering and Seaton lands were expropriated 30 years ago. In spite of the good intentions of governments to preserve the area for agriculture, farm business economics and land use in proximity to these lands has discouraged farm business from relocating on the preserve lands...."

"This preserve is more about ideology than pragmatism. It clearly demonstrates that the preservation of farmland requires much more thought and planning than simply making a declaration. Farmland that is not economically feasible to farm ... is not real farmland at all; rather it is the green space that many ideologues seek in the guise of 'farmland.'"

Having heard the facts, it's time to weigh the science. On my right is just a sampling of the various studies and reports that have recently been prepared both by the city and from the West Duffins Landowners Group to indicate that at least some development should be allowed in Cherrywood. Needless to say, I didn't bring 30 copies of every document, but certainly if any member of the committee wants copies, they're available on request.

On my left, by contrast, this is a copy of the Liberal Party campaign platform for Growing Strong Communities. This is the only document I've been referred to by

the government to justify the inclusion of Cherrywood within the greenbelt, and believe me, I've asked on numerous occasions.

I think the results are pretty obvious. It's no wonder so many people are convinced that the only science that is being used to justify the inclusion of Cherrywood in this greenbelt is in fact political science. If we're wrong and the entire greenbelt is in fact based on actual science, the government should have no problem putting its reports on the table, as we've done, before passing this bill, and subjecting those reports to the same detailed level of scrutiny that would be expected of any one of us if we were to put forward a similar proposal.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Flowers. You've left the three parties with about 45 seconds each, beginning with the official opposition.

Mr. Hudak: Thanks very much. I'll decline my time so the government can answer your question about when they'll put forward their reports instead of a campaign brochure to justify their decisions.

The Chair: Ms. Churley?

Ms. Churley: Here is my problem with your concept of putting the power back into municipalities or keeping it there. Isn't one of the issues that the growth management study you're talking about was funded by developers, not the town itself? At what point, then, can you determine, I suppose, how neutral a study is in that case and why it's so important to have some provincial oversight over significant environmental land and prime agricultural land?

Mr. Flowers: Thank you, Ms. Churley, for that question. In fact, I'm not sure if you're aware, but it's not uncommon at all for the development industry to fund a number of growth management studies. Certainly Pickering is not alone in that; I can assure you of that. Many times, developers put forward reports. They're asked to be peer-reviewed and they have to pay for that peer review. The same question was raised at a Pickering council meeting directly to the lead consultant for the city's growth management study, Dillon Consulting, and I can tell you that Dillon Consulting took a lot of offence at that kind of allegation.

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Ms. Churley: I think I was there and heard that exchange. It's not questioning anybody's integrity, I suppose, but I think there's a point to be made here about objectivity, depending on who's paying for the study. It's not necessarily bad. Developers have certain interests; that's what you do. But municipalities are representing the people. So I do see a bit of a conflict there, which brings me back to—

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Churley. Your time has expired. Ms. Van Bommel, from the government side.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you very much for your presentation. Is this matter currently before the courts or the OMB?

Mr. Flowers: Which matter in particular?

Mrs. Van Bommel: The whole issue of the preserve.

Mr. Flowers: There is a court application dealing with the Ontario Planning and Development Act process that's currently ongoing. There's a minister's zoning order on the lands as well, put in place by the previous government, and there was a request by the city of Pickering some time ago to revoke that order. It was not done, and it has subsequently been requested that the OMB now schedule a hearing to hear the matter about revocation. I'm not aware that the OMB has opened any case filed.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Flowers. We appreciate your being here today.

JOHN HOLTROP

The Chair: Our next delegation is John Holtrop. Welcome. Could you just identify yourself and give us your address? When you do start, you have 10 minutes.

Mr. John Holtrop: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is John Holtrop. I'm 58 years old, the average age of the Ontario farmer. I've been farming for 38 years in York region, growing cash crops—canola, soybeans, corn and wheat—on about 5,200 acres. I'm going to keep this short and sweet because the brain can only take in about as much as the bum can stand.

I'll start from here. For me, the greenbelt legislation is a double-edged sword. I have been actively involved in preserving farmland in the GTA for a number of years. I agree with the reasons for creating a greenbelt. It preserves farmland for food production for the people of Ontario. It protects the natural filtration system of air and water for all society. It maintains the habitat and provides a corridor for wildlife. These are all benefits for society, and the whole needs to share in its cost.

As I've already mentioned, the average age of the Ontario farmer is approximately 58 years. If any other industry or profession of society had 58 years as the average age of its working members, we would be extremely worried about who would be taking over the profession. Yet the attitude toward farmers seems to be, so what?

Farming represents a huge investment in capital. Knowledge that is never found in a textbook is passed down from one generation to the next. This too will be lost if a son or daughter cannot take over from their parents. It is not an industry that you can leave and then take up once again. Once a farmer stops, he does not start up again at a later date. Most of the younger farmers must continue to work for their parents because they are not able to complete the generational rollover. Finance is the most inhibiting factor in transferring farms to the next generation. Financial distress is the result of the lack of using proper political means to prevent the dumping of cheap commodities and food products into Ontario. Financial distress is caused by the unwillingness of the government, federal and provincial, to match foreign support for our farming citizens.

Our present returns do not come close to reflecting our cost of production. We must join foreign countries in

either supporting our primary producers or prevent dumping of these foreign commodities.

The creation of the greenbelt just adds another factor to our financial woes. The creation of the greenbelt has devalued farmland immediately. It has taken away the opportunity to clear up debts and retire in dignity. We have no company pension or health care, as we are self-employed. It makes it more difficult to borrow money, as our land equity has been eroded severely with the introduction of the greenbelt. Lenders are reluctant to loan money on depreciating land value.

Farmers should be able to retire. Proper compensation would ensure that this is possible. Developers are already compensated because the properties they hold, which are already rezoned, have increased in value dramatically.

The greenbelt legislation also brings to mind a number of questions: What will the tax implications of the original landowners be if compensation is supplied? Is there a hidden agenda? Who wins, who loses? Will the next government be able to break or change this law again, and to whose benefit? Politicians are able to break promises without reprisal. What about laws? Can these laws be repealed?

I have spoken at length about the financial crisis facing the farming community. However, unless we address this first, why should we preserve our farmland, even if it is good stewardship to do so? If it is not profitable for us to farm, why save the land? Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We have two minutes for each party. Ms. Churley, you are the first speaker.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much for your presentation. Have you been here all day?

Mr. Holtrop: No, just this afternoon.

Ms. Churley: I thought your opening comments might have indicated that. That's a bit how I feel at the end of the day, although the presentations have been great.

It's good to hear from you. It's good to hear from farmers who are directly affected. There is no doubt that there are a number of very serious issues facing you. My question would be, and you went into it a little bit, with or without the greenbelt, these issues are becoming a crisis—BSE, commodity prices and all kinds of things. What are some suggestions to make to the government and to all politicians about things you need to put in place so you can remain viable? After all, that's what you want. You don't want your farm paved over, but you want to be able to make a good living and keep your farm viable.

Mr. Holtrop: First of all, all governments have to follow the law, the same as we do. In the WTO and in NAFTA, the North American free trade agreement, there's a law that clearly states that one state is not allowed to ship into another state at below its own cost of production. We in Ontario and the government under Mr. Peters is allowing today for corn to come in at \$85 to \$88 a ton when it costs the Americans \$165 to produce. Why isn't the government doing something about that? That's

number one that they should look at. If they did that, it would solve a lot of the problems. Also, there's a case of interprovincial trade injury. Ontario is allowing Western grains, based in Saskatchewan, at 87 cents a bushel for wheat to come in and affect our growers. Why isn't the provincial government doing something about this? If they did all these things, then we wouldn't have a greenbelt problem.

The Chair: From the government side? Mrs. Van Bommel, are you asking questions?

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you very much for your presentation. There are a lot of things that you have said, and I certainly support a lot of your concerns. I stated this morning and I'll state again this afternoon that what's happening in agriculture is not just happening here in the greenbelt or in Ontario but is happening all across Canada, and we're seeing real problems in the farm community.

You stated at the beginning of your presentation that you support the preservation of farmland. I've heard the comment from different presenters that you save the farmers and then that will save the farmland. But from my perspective as a farmer, it seems a bit of a chicken-and-egg scenario, because without the farmland, there's not much point in having farmers.

Mr. Holtrop: But with farmland and no farmers, what's the point in saving the farmland? It has to be profitable. If society as a whole is going to benefit from the green space—and society will benefit from this green space—then society as a whole should pay. In other jurisdictions in Europe and in the States, there are examples where they do pay and are willing to pay, but in our case, it seems like nobody is willing to pay and yet we continually erode the value of the farmer's equity.

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Mrs. Van Bommel: You mentioned the GATT and the WTO. When you say that European nations and the US too, with their farm bill, subsidize or support their farm communities, how do they get around that in terms of the international trade agreements that we as Canadians work so hard to live by?

Mr. Holtrop: First of all, laws are only made to be obeyed. If you choose, as a province or as a group of people, not to obey a law, then you get away with it. The Americans are not obeying the law of the trade agreements and are shipping subsidized corn into Canada and Ontario. The Ontario government is choosing to close a blind eye through trade agreements and through its trade department, and federally we're also guilty, even more so, in not observing these trade laws, keeping track of these trade injuries and acting upon them. It's squarely in the government's corner to do something about this.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Holtrop. Our last question is from Mrs. Munro, from the official opposition.

Mrs. Munro: Thank you for coming today. The government member raised questions about agricultural viability, and certainly the government has tried to introduce that notion into many of the conversations today. But because we're here to talk about the greenbelt

and the implications it has for us as residents of the greenbelt, the important thing for us to understand here is, how does this impact on the viability of the farmers and the agricultural community in this region? The important thing I'd like you to respond to is, what are the special needs that make agricultural viability a different kind of issue for GTA farmers?

Mr. Holtrop: That's quite a big question you've got there. The whole viability of a farmer in the GTA is much different than for a farmer, let's say, 200 miles to the east or west. First of all, as people have said, the traffic problems. We have 1,700 cars an hour going in front of our—if you want to know about road rage, I'll show you road rage.

Then we have the problem of urban shadow. We have subdivisions being built, and the people who live in the subdivisions think they own the land beside it that we own. They have their snowmobiles and their four-wheel drives and build forts all over the place. Farming is a huge problem in the GTA. It's a sad point of view that maybe we've left a lot of this too late already. Sad to say, farmland ownership, as previous speakers have said, has passed away from the farmers. It has gone into corporations and people who look at land as nothing more than speculative value and shares and stocks on the stock exchange.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Holtrop, for your passion and your enthusiasm. We appreciate your being here today.

Mr. Holtrop: I could tell a lot more jokes, but you don't have time.

JOHN KAY

The Chair: Our next delegation is Mr. John Kay. Welcome. If you could identify yourself and your address for Hansard, you'll have 10 minutes to speak. Should you use all of the 10 minutes, then we won't have time for questions or comments, but if you don't, there will be time.

Mr. John Kay: My name is John Kay, 9529 Reesor Road, Markham L6B 1A8.

Thank you very much to all the committee. I've been involved with land use issues for the past 10 years. I could talk about some principles.

Self-interest is not a virtue. It's OK for food in your stomach and clothes on your back, but that's as far as it goes. Governance should be for the common good and it should be universal. You are the guardians for the next 500 years. That's what is on the table.

Sprawling urban development gobbles up resources. We can't afford that. This bill is a good first step. However, you haven't applied the principles of universality. This bill doesn't plan to compensate landowners, yet this Legislature has compensated landowners. I'm referring to the land swap deal between developers and the province, in terms of the Oak Ridges moraine and the Pickering lands in Seaton. You guaranteed the developers' investment. You should now abrogate that past

agreement and expropriate the lands they used to own in the Oak Ridges moraine and the lands they now hold in Seaton and let the developers sue the crown. If you don't do this, then this Legislature has to compensate every landowner under this bill. They all deserve compensation unless you abrogate all this monkey business with the developers on Seaton and the land swap on the Oak Ridges moraine.

The developers land-banked all that land on the Oak Ridges moraine. They probably used farm tax credits when they were land-banking it. Enact this bill and don't give compensation, then create something like a land trust or the National Trust in England.

Just as an aside, some history: The provincial government structured the land sales in the agricultural preserve in Markham and Pickering, primarily in Pickering because Markham hasn't been sold yet, to favour developers. As a consequence, the provincial lands sold in the ag. preserve were primarily bought up by developers. They now own half of that land. They also paid for a study, as referred to earlier, which the town of Pickering adopted. So the protected lands, which citizens fought to protect with an easement, are now in jeopardy. Also, the province sold hundreds of acres of land in Markham around the Cornell site, which is around 9th Line and 16th Avenue. Do you know what the average price was? Around \$44,000 an acre. This was in the 1990s and 2000s. That's the Ontario Realty Corp.

The purpose of my telling you these facts is that this bill had better be watertight and it had better be universal. It has to be fair to everyone. If you're going to give developers and corporate interests special deals, then you'd better compensate landowners affected by this bill.

I encourage all the MPPs to abolish the Ontario Municipal Board; it short-circuits municipal democracy.

Carry on protecting parts of the province with bills like this.

I want to give you a postscript: Remember Duffin Capital Corp. that just made a presentation, and the West Duffins Landowners Group? Well, those folks paid for a very expensive and extensive ad campaign to Pickering citizens, and guess what? They illustrated the natural importance and value of Seaton. They didn't want to develop it, according to their ads—corporate monkey business, hoodwinking the public. Duffin Capital Corp. and the developers they represent and other developers—guess what, folks? They bought provincial crown land in Pickering for between \$4,000 and \$8,000 an acre when it's worth \$44,000 an acre—massive, massive fraud and profits to the billions. I say it's fraud because farming tenants had first right to refuse or first right to purchase the properties in Markham and Pickering, primarily Pickering, and they gave those rights over to developers to purchase.

So this is the kind of monkey business with public land, OK? If you're going to protect land that's owned by private people—farmers and the like—it has to be universal. If you're not compensating them, you'd better

start taking away all the compensation that you gave the development industry.

That's it. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. We have a minute and a bit for each party, the government side beginning.

Mr. Lalonde: I don't want to go back to the previous administration, because you referred to the fact that some people bought the land at \$44,000 an acre before. That was certainly a gift, but probably somebody was trying to balance the books.

Mr. Kay: No, no. That's Ontario Realty Corp. selling to Cornell developers in the town of Markham—a sweet-heart deal—and that's a crown corporation of the province, sir.

Mr. Lalonde: It is the government. The Ontario Realty Corp. is run by the Management Board.

Mr. Kay: Right.

Mr. Lalonde: Do you really believe in this greenbelt legislation that would protect our agricultural land for the future of the people of this province?

Mr. Kay: I've read Bill 135. I didn't get to read the Oak Ridges moraine and escarpment acts referred to in the bill. I didn't get to read those two documents, so I don't know the nuts and bolts of this legislation. All I'm saying is that if you're going to take away farmers' right to develop their land or sell it to developers in the future, I've got no problem with that, but I think you've got to draw a line—not a Smart Growth study—draw a line on the map and say you're not going to develop this. You've got to have universal fairness. You gave these developers, like these guys who were sitting in the back here earlier, billions and billions and billions. You guaranteed their investments. And all the farmers back here who came? You're giving them naught, you're ripping them off.

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The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kay. Your next question is from the official opposition.

Mr. Hudak: I appreciate your points, Mr. Kay. You talked about the National Trust in Britain or a land trust to assist farmers who are—

Mr. Kay: Not to assist; a creation of a land trust. It's a separate legal organization. The government could have a member or two on the board. It's like a private, non-profit corporation.

Mr. Hudak: So how would it function? What's your recommendation to the committee if we were to adopt this?

Mr. Kay: Well, you guys have all the resources. I took time off work, OK? Go to England and find out how they work it. I know it's successful. Have you ever been to the Yorkshire dales? You know, All Creatures Great and Small? Figure it out. It's all exactly the way it was in the 1930s. I've been there. You've got the resources, sir; not me. I'm a citizen. I took time off work to come and talk to you.

The Chair: Thank you. Our next speaker is Ms. Churley. This is the last question.

Ms. Churley: One more minute—give us one more minute of your time.

Mr. Kay: All right. I like you. You're a good one.

Ms. Churley: Thank you. You're making me blush, but I'm not hot.

Listen, I appreciate many of the concerns you raised. They're really important for everybody to consider, because the greenbelt that's before us now is not consistent. What you're saying is to some extent what I'm saying, that you've got to be fair and even about it. You're right: We have the expertise and the staff to read all of these things, and having gone through the documentation and all the mapping and things, right now there's a very serious concern about what's in and what's out of the greenbelt. And the impact of that on the farmers here who are here today—

Mr. Kay: I can get a map, Ma'am, and draw a whole bunch of lines on it; then don't develop inside it and keep it all green. But all this Smart Growth stuff of the PC government, that's all nonsense. Develop here, develop there, that's nonsense. Draw a line on a map.

Ms. Churley: But we're talking about the Liberals and their plan.

Mr. Kay: Well, that's—you know. Draw a line on a map, a whole vast region contiguous, and don't develop inside of it. Take back the money from the developers and give these farmers no compensation. That's what I'm telling you. Don't give these developers compensation. You gave them billions, hundreds of billions you gave them, and that's the truth.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kay. Thank you for your time.

GREENWOOD AREA RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

The Chair: Our next delegation is Greenwood Area Ratepayers' Association.

Mr. Edward Tait: Good afternoon. My name is Edward Tait. I live at 2550 Concession 6 in Greenwood, Ontario.

The Chair: Thank you. You don't need any training. I didn't have to go through my spiel. You have 15 minutes to speak.

Mr. Tait: I'm speaking on behalf of the Greenwood Area Ratepayers' Association, also known as GARA. GARA is a non-profit organization that represents close to 100 home- and landowners in the area around Greenwood.

We would like to commend the government's initiative in the creation of the greenbelt. The need to protect the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges moraine is undeniable. Too much of our natural heritage is being sacrificed to a notion of progress that is destructive to the very thing we need to survive: our environment.

The greenbelt plan manifests the Ontario government's recognition of the need to protect green space and contain urban sprawl. Special significance is given to

environmentally sensitive areas, sustaining countryside and rural communities, agricultural lands, restoration and improvement of ecosystems and the preservation and development of cultural heritage resources. Greenwood has all of these features.

The decision to make the shoreline of the ancient Lake Iroquois the eastern boundary of the Duffins Creek greenbelt corridor leaves the hamlet of Greenwood half in and half out of the protected zone. The portion of the hamlet and surrounding area located on top of a drumlin is in unprotected countryside.

The people of Greenwood respectfully submit that there are compelling reasons to include the entire hamlet and the surrounding environs in the greenbelt. GARA believes that the area included should run from Sideline 16 on the west to Salem Road on the east, and from Concession 5 to the south as far north as Highway 7. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's studies of local groundwater systems, however, show that this area is only a part of a much larger one that seems to have been completely overlooked.

The protected portion of the village is situated in a spectacular natural setting in the Duffins Creek valley. It contains historic buildings such as the original hotel, the homes of many of the original settlers, the Pickering Pioneer Museum, which was founded by local citizens, and a recreation complex built by local residents over 30 years ago and in constant use since then.

The portion not protected sits on top of the hill, commanding wonderful views overlooking the Duffins Creek valley. Here are the homes of the original settlers of what used to be the old village of English Corners 150 years ago. The original schoolhouse is there, Greenwood's oldest house is there, and the community church.

For many years, the city of Pickering and Durham region's official plans have designated the northeast area of Pickering as a rural area, with hamlets, farms and natural heritage. We now have learned that the province's Places to Grow plan identifies any area not in the greenbelt and south of the moraine as a target for future urban development. The cultural heritage and environmental beauty of our area have drawn, and will continue to draw, development interest.

One cannot live in Greenwood and not be aware of the amount of water in the ground. Most of us experience flooded basements during thaws and heavy rainfalls. God help you if your sump pump fails, and mine has three times. A slow-moving stream ran through the basement of our house year-round when we first moved there, until I could put a concrete floor in with drainage tiles, a sump hole and a pump; and we live at the top of the hill.

When we excavated for an addition 20 years ago, we cut through a clay drainage pipe and torrents of water poured into the pit out of that pipe. I learned that at the turn of the last century, these pipes were laid down at a depth of four feet at 15-foot intervals across the hilltop to the north of Concession 6 because the soil was too wet to work. A stream of water is flowing through the cellar of my daughter's home six properties down the hill. A

gentleman three properties down the hill from her gets flooded out regularly by a pair of springs at the southeast corner of his property. And at the bottom of the hill there are artesian wells.

When homes are built on the lower reaches of the slope, massive water flows out of the ground as a result, much like the big pipe in York region. Swales and ditches have had to be dug around the tennis courts and the baseball diamond in the park because so much water seeps out of the hillside above it. Our friends down the hill are drinking tea that has spent time in my basement. I apologize to my friend John at the bottom of the hill for the paint thinner I spilled down there. But that's the history of man, isn't it? Screw the guy downstream. Well, here's a chance to change how we write that history.

The greenbelt plan is designed to protect Ontario's water sources, working in tandem with the proposed source water protection plan. The Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges moraine are the main areas of concern, but also included are river connections from those two areas into Lake Ontario and features outside those two areas such as watershed systems and major discharge zones. These are places where groundwater drains into streams and rivers that flow into the lakes.

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Greenwood sits in the middle of a major discharge area that accounts for 27% of the water that drains into Duffins Creek. The moraine accounts for 56%. These figures are taken from the Duffins Creek State of the Watershed Report done by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. This report also indicates, "The key recharge mechanism for the flow system is infiltration of precipitation and subsequent vertical leakage through the aquitards"—in other words, rain. For those of you who don't know what aquitards are, they are not what happens when a dancer wets her pants; these are layers of soil that are less permeable and slow down the flow of the water. This is not water from the moraine, but from local rainfall that falls around Greenwood and soaks into the ground and finds its way through our cellars, down the hill and into the creek.

I might add that north of Highway 7, the alignment of the greenbelt boundary with the Lake Iroquois shoreline leaves unprotected wetlands and ponds that form a flow of water from the Claremont Conservation Area, down the west side of Westney Road, that is destined for Duffins Creek. At the very least, that line should be drawn to the east of that feeder system, in line with conservation area's eastern boundary.

However, we believe that the real forgotten piece of the large picture is the Carruthers watershed, which lies to the east of the Greenwood hill, between it and Salem Road. The fact that it is visually less dramatic than Duffins does not reduce its significance. Its source is not on the moraine but is several springs located close by, south of Concession 8 and between Westney and Kinsale Roads. It feeds large tracts of wetlands south of Highway 7, which are an important habitat for birds and other

wildlife. Just as a note, there's a field just to the east of Greenwood hill that is part of that Carruthers area, and it's an absolutely spectacular hatching site for fireflies in the late spring. It looks like a field covered with diamonds. It's one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen. I'd hate to see something like that get destroyed. This is exactly the type of area targeted by the water source protection plan. This area has also been studied by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and identified as a valuable ground water resource. GARA strongly recommends its inclusion in the protected zone.

Here, as with the Duffins system, the Greenwood hill plays an important role. Ground water flows from the top of the drumlin into Carruthers. Several seepage points can be seen along the road allowance that runs south from Concession 6 about one kilometre east of Westney Road. The hilltop area in and surrounding Greenwood plays a crucial role in the hydrogeological system of this very sensitive part of our region. It is one of only two drumlins in this area. The other, on Brock Road just north of Taunton, is not protected either.

We know that development has the effect of lowering water tables. All those fountain-sporting ponds outside of the subdivisions around Brooklin look pretty and are fancy, but that's the water that's bled out of the ground by putting in a development like that.

The destructive construction technique of levelling the topography and stripping off topsoil destroys the permeability of the soil and dries it out. The rainfall that now goes into our creek systems would then be piped out to the lake. Aquifer levels drop and, in turn, well levels drop and river flows are reduced.

We believe that the greenbelt can ensure the future viability of these water systems for future generations. I'm sure that's what you intend. The price they will have to pay for our failures is beyond our imagining. The gentleman before me said something about drawing a line in the sand. That's my line too. The time is now, before the damage is done, and you are the people who can do it.

The Chair: Thank you. We have about one and a half minutes for each party. The official opposition will begin.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you very much, Mr. Tait and the other members of the Greenwood Area Ratepayers' Association. You make some excellent points. I think this is a theme we've heard consistently about making sure that the proper areas are protected and that it is science-based and looks to the future. That having been said, we've heard a lot of concerns, whether it's here today or in Toronto at various public meetings, that there are serious and growing discrepancies with the government's map and what the reality is on the ground. In fact, we've called for the science to be tabled so that we can make sure and the public can make sure that the science appropriately fits the mapping decisions.

Give us some advice in terms of a process from here. What's the best way to make sure there's a transparent process to ensure that the proper lands are protected; if

there are areas left out of the greenbelt that should be in or vice versa?

Mr. Tait: Certainly, you can't stint on public input. It's the public who know these things.

The other thing is that what really dictates what needs to be done is not the political process, it's not the pressures for development, and it's not even the needs of the farmers—and God knows they're in a hell of a plight—but it's the planet that indicates what's necessary. You have to protect where the important systems are located, where the water is in the ground, where it's coming from, how it travels, where it travels, where the wildlife lives. The wildlife indicates where our environment is healthy. It doesn't exist anywhere else. I think it's a no-brainer, quite frankly.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much for your presentation. Your comment about downstream reminded me of a little button I have that says, "We can't all live upstream." That is the reality. Thank you for painting a bit of a picture of some of the impacts of intense development on you personally and on your community.

You just mentioned political, but what kinds of pressures has the intense development that has been going on put on your community, in terms of fighting it and dealing with it and stuff?

Mr. Tait: Having lived there for more than 30 years, I can attest that in those years—and by the way, the original airport was announced six months after we moved in—I've actually had nightmares about looking out my window and seeing factory buildings across the road from me.

The reason I live in Greenwood is because of how I feel about the environment, our planet and the beauty that we should be surrounding ourselves with. The pressure for me is emotional and psychological. People would argue, "Build more houses near where we are, and our property value goes up." I don't care about that. I want to see that there is going to be something left of our planet that my children, my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren will be able to survive in and enjoy.

The Chair: Mr. Rinaldi, from the government side.

Mr. Rinaldi: I was one of those people downstream from you 30 years ago.

Mr. Tait: I apologize to you, too.

Mr. Rinaldi: But I'm still here. I was downstream from Greenwood.

I have a comment more than a question. As Mr. Hudak said in his statement, we keep on hearing about these boundaries and how they're determined. I think we're getting a mixed message, because, really, what we're talking about in these hearings is being able to enact greenbelt legislation to protect those types of things that you and some other presenters mentioned and, hopefully, to protect some farmland for the future, even though they have those. We're getting hung up on boundaries. I think that submissions like you and other folks have made today will help our government make sure to try to get those boundaries the best we can.

I guess what I'm try to say is I really appreciated those comments you made, particularly about Greenwood. There are a million other places just like Greenwood in the province of Ontario, so I certainly appreciate your input and your dedication.

The Chair: Thank you for your thoughtful presentation and your humour. We appreciate that at the end of the day.

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NICHOLAS GALATI

The Chair: Our next presenter will be Nicholas Galati. Welcome. Please identify yourself for Hansard and state your address. When you begin, you will be given 10 minutes.

Mr. Nicholas Galati: My name is Nicholas Galati. I reside at 33 Pearson Avenue, Richmond Hill, L4C 6T2. I want to thank the ladies and gentlemen of the committee for permitting me to speak.

I am an owner of approximately 60 acres of moraine land designated as countryside. I'm here today speaking on my own behalf. However, I'm confident that the views I am about to express reflect the views of many landowners affected by Bill 135 in general and specifically regarding the Oak Ridges moraine act of 2001.

I purchased a 20.75-acre parcel in 1987 and later, in 1990, I purchased a 50% interest in a 40-acre parcel abutting this property. The property's situated just one kilometre north of Davis Drive and one kilometre east of Woodbine Avenue. My total investment in both of these properties to date is \$900,000. The property taxes I've been paying over the many years are currently between \$8,000 and \$9,000 annually.

It's a large sum of money for anybody to be investing in land, and the question you might ask is why I did so? It wasn't to speculate, as was suggested by the planners of East Gwillimbury township at a public meeting a couple of years ago, where one of the planners said to me, and I quote, "It's not anyone's fault"—referring to me—"that you speculated and it didn't turn out in your favour." I stated to them at that time and I state to the committee here today that I don't understand why anybody would make such a comment. Speculation, in my opinion, is not when you buy land and hold on to it for 15 years, hoping that one day you'll reap some benefits for your retirement as we did. I disagreed then and I disagree with anybody who suggests that all landowners are developers, all landowners are bad, all landowners are speculators. We invested in land for the sake of investment only.

I came to this country in 1953 at the age of four. My father was a proud Canadian until he died at the relatively young age of 67. He taught me and my five siblings well. He told us to always be honest and work hard and we will be rewarded. He also taught us to invest our money wisely and that we could never go wrong buying land. So I did just that. I worked very hard for 25 years. My wife and I saved our money and invested most

of our entire savings into these previously described parcels of land.

The subject land is situated, as I said, one kilometre north of Davis Drive and one kilometre east of Woodbine and runs southward from there. Anyone who knows this area also knows that the town of Newmarket is quite literally at the doorstep of our property.

The region of York has, in the last year or so, brought in water and sewers across Highway 404 to facilitate a brand new garbage transfer station on a street named Bales Drive, I believe it is, or Avenue, which is about half a mile or less from our property, in an industrial park complex which in the future, I'm told, will also house additional York regional facilities, such as emergency services and possibly the works department.

How peculiar and ironic that the Oak Ridges moraine excludes the lands that the municipality has purchased for the transfer station, including a 100-acre parcel immediately north of the transfer station that the region expropriated and paid, I understand, about \$1 million for 100 acres, and yet my lands are frozen totally, except I'm told that with a lot—a lot—of restrictions I might be able to build a single-family home, with very strict municipal enforcement.

The province, by freezing future development on my land, has stripped away not only my right to expect a return on my investment of 15 years, but has also eroded my principal cost, and thus robbed me of my trust in the government and in the system, unfortunately—the trust that I had in the free and democratic system. In the last decade or two, as we all know, we have witnessed an unprecedented change among many nations worldwide that had suffered greatly throughout the Communist era, and still even today many are giving up their lives for a taste of democracy. What is happening here, through Bill 135 and the Oak Ridges moraine act, is nothing short of government—through legislation, I might add—stripping my family, as well as many others, of our honest, hard-earned investment. Shame on you, I say.

Yes, I most definitely believe in conservation, the protection of trees and wildlife. I further believe that there is no reason whatsoever that with all the available wisdom, resources and knowledge in government's hands today, as well as in the private sector's hands, we cannot find a way to have orderly and well-planned development side by side with nature trails, with watersheds and wildlife still protected. It would allow people who live in these areas to experience nature at first hand by being close to nature itself in their own neighbourhoods. This is achievable on the moraine by careful and thoughtful planning, not by freezing land. All this is going to do is increase the value of land, and then you're going to get building everywhere else but the moraine, so what good is it protecting that?

We allow 250,000 immigrants here every year—I am an immigrant myself; I have no problem with that—and probably 75% of them wish to live in the greater Toronto area. Where are you going to put them, in Sudbury? They don't want to go to Sudbury. There's no work in Sudbury.

A leading University of Toronto hydrologist by the name of Ken Howard said in 2001 at an OMB hearing, "I've been working on groundwater for 25 years, and I believe that development can take place on the moraine in ways that minimize the impact on water quality and quantity."

In my own research on the subject, I've discovered that the moraine was actually first mapped out by government in 1943. Many governments of different stripes have come and gone since then, and not one of them, in their wisdom, saw the need to protect it in the last 60 years, at a time when they could have bought this land for next to nothing. I suggest that they look at lands away from the urban areas now and try to protect those while they can purchase them for next to nothing.

Today the government, like a thief in the night, wants not only to steal my right to be able to achieve a reasonable return on my investment in the land I sacrificed to buy and keep, but with the stroke of a pen to take away my dignity.

I do believe that by giving a mandate of one year or more to a group made up of qualified persons, we can achieve an equitable solution. Don't rush this through for political gain. I say to the current government, don't make the mistake the previous government did, and that is to play politics with the welfare of Ontario landowners, including farmers. However, if you wish to do so, go ahead and do so, but compensate me accordingly.

I paid \$900,000 for these properties. I want to achieve a reasonable return on that, otherwise I have no belief in my constitutional rights as a landowner. I'm not here as a steward for others' wishful thinking that we're going to protect this forever. We're not, unless we learn to develop these lands side by side in such a way that they can all interconnect with the greenbelt.

Just as an example, this development is 100 acres, and it has to have 10% that will be linked with another 10% or 15% of the next development. This is reality. It's not a pipe dream, like so many people think, that we're going to protect the world. In fact, habitable population area makes up only one-half of 1% of all the land mass in Ontario. We're making like Ontario's all here in greater Toronto. It's not. There's a lot of open space, a lot of wildlife.

The Chair: Mr. Galati, you have 10 seconds left.

Mr. Galati: In closing I say, please, if you want to play politics, compensate me for my hard work of many, many years.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your delegation.

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JIM MOORE

The Chair: Our next delegation is Mr. Jim Moore. Welcome, Mr. Moore. If you could identify yourself for Hansard, and your address, when you begin you'll have 10 minutes.

Mr. Jim Moore: My name is Jim Moore. I'm a dairy farmer. We live on Lot 24, Concession 5W, Chingua-

cousy. My address is RR 1 Terra Cotta, Ontario. If anyone wants to know where we are on the map, on 72, it says lot 24, Concession 5W on there. We're up in the very top corner.

As you see by the heading, we used to breed dairy cattle for export. Thanks to our lax federal government in bringing BSE into the country and not looking after slaughtering the cattle properly, this is the mess we're in today, so I guess I'm back to a dairy farmer and a crop producer.

On to the greenbelt: The greenbelt, in theory, is a great idea, on land that should be protected, especially for environmental reasons. If the Peel plain had been protected 20 years ago or more, a viable farm community may have been able to exist today.

Protecting land does not protect agriculture. Viable farming protects agriculture. Viable farmers must make enough money to not only produce a healthy commodity but also to cover costs of keeping up with government regulations both for the environment and for the public's sake. Nutrient management is a perfect example of one of these costs, as farmers must implement this on their farms in the near future. On our farm, we milk 40 cows. We have 200 acres. For us to milk just 40 cows, 200 acres is barely enough, I understand, to come under nutrient management, so future expansion is out of the question in our area.

Three important criteria for the Greenbelt Task Force were that land should be zoned greenbelt where there is an environmental reason or an area where agriculture is viable and there is an agricultural infrastructure in place. My land is in an area where there is no environmental reason for zoning that greenbelt, and with development on my doorstep, there is no longer an agricultural infrastructure in place, which makes farming no longer viable in this area. There is one farm south of us deemed greenbelt, where the second farm and all farms south are to developed in the near future. Two and a half farms north of us is the Niagara Escarpment, so all that is left is four and a half lots. It is very hard to be a viable farmer left alone on a small part of the Peel plain.

On some places on the Niagara Escarpment there are pockets of farmland. North of us there are very few. I can think of two dairy farms between me and Erin, which is a 20-minute drive. In the region of Peel, 10 years ago we had over 100 milk producers; today we have 53. With you guys bringing this thing in, I know of at least six farms where dairy producers live that have been sold in the last two months. Guys have been offered enough money, they're out of the greenbelt, and they're going to move to a more agricultural-based area. I hope they do set up and I hope they are prosperous. I think we can be if we have the tools to do it, but if we're going to be stuck in a pocket down there, it's not going to be a profitable thing for us to do.

Since the greenbelt zoning, it is no longer worth enough to sell and move to a more agricultural-based area. Speculators have been in and offered to purchase our farm at a discount price. They even point out that

they could not afford to buy the land to farm south of us, as the value is so much higher as it is not in the greenbelt.

We are at the point where we need to expand. We cannot expand here. We are not at full capacity in our barn for the 200 acres. We could milk 50 cows. With three sons, I need either to expand or get out. The only future I see for our property, if it is left in the greenbelt, is two 100-acre estate lots.

My family has been through this before, so we know what happens. My grandfather purchased 150 acres on Eglinton Avenue back in the mid-1920s. His land was greenbelted in the early 1950s, also to protect farmland. All the farmland in the community was bought up by speculators at rock-bottom prices and turned over two or three times. Part of his land was expropriated for two hydro lines and a gas line. Then, most of the farm was sold. He retained two acres for his house and then rented the land back and worked it until the mid-1970s.

Some of the proceeds were used in 1956 to put a down payment on the property we now have south of Terra Cotta. The decision to move to this area was not speculative but was for economic reasons. If you lived in this area, you could ship bulk milk to Toronto and get paid more money, as we were close enough to Toronto. In the 1980s, the two acres of my grandparents' home were then expropriated for the Credit Valley Hospital. This farm now has both the Erin Mills Parkway and the 403 right through it as well; so much for greenbelt and saving farmland.

It is very hypocritical of the government to greenbelt land and then be able to build roads and garbage dumps on so-called protected countryside. It was not that long ago that land was zoned greenbelt in the corridor for the 407. The government bought the land at value prices, and then after building the 407, it has been able to sell off parcels of the land for \$200,000 and more. I have been informed in the last year that a new highway is going from the 400 to Guelph. It is proposed to go through or close to our farm. I also hear rumours of an additional BramWest coming up from the 401 to Mayfield Road. A dump servicing the GTA is also a strong possibility on this property just south of the escarpment. There are very few things that are less environmentally friendly than a major highway or a dump. I do not, and have no desire to, produce milk beside either of these. I see the government once again devaluing land just so they can expropriate it. Once again, our family are the ones who will stand to lose.

The attitude of Ontarians is that it seems criminal for a farmer to have money, no matter how hard he works. Liberal MPPs have been stating that the only farmers who disagree with the greenbelt are those who are speculators. Well, I've lived here on this land all my life. Land values should increase over the years, while I farm and continue to make improvements. I'm just a good businessman. The ones who are speculators are those who buy land when prices are low, hold on to it for a short time, then either sell it for a great deal more or develop it. I think the government is the one that is the true specu-

lator. In fact, the government greenbelt virtually freezes the land until they need it and then—

The Chair: Mr. Moore, you have 10 seconds left.

Mr. Moore: —and then expropriates it. It seems anyone who makes money when they sell their land is a good businessman, such as the finance minister of Ontario. I'll leave it there.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your heartfelt delegation. We appreciate you being here today. Thank you very much.

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HALTON COMPASS

The Chair: Our last delegation today in our public hearing portion is the Halton Compass. Good afternoon. Could you identify yourself for Hansard and the group that you speak for before you begin? When you do begin, you have 15 minutes. Should you use all your time, there won't be an opportunity for questions, but if you don't, we will make sure you get an opportunity to be asked questions.

Mr. Stephen Baker: Thank you. My name is Stephen Baker. I'm a farmer and landowner and I'm the publisher of the Halton Compass, which has a circulation of 50,536. We cover all of Halton, down to Oakville and Burlington and a big chunk of Wellington county. I'm also a director of the Halton Region Federation of Agriculture and a member of the HAAC committee.

I'm speaking on my own behalf, also on behalf of my paper and on behalf of the farmers I associate with and represent.

Do we need a greenbelt? We have environmental factions in and out of government pushing for the preservation of almost all farmland in Halton region and a goodly chunk of Wellington county. This preservation under the proposed greenbelt legislation is intended to be complementary to the province's Place to Grow initiative. How one can freeze almost all the land and at the same time provide an adequate inventory of building lots remains a mystery.

We have two separate ministries working on the problem, though not necessarily in the same direction. What is unclear is which initiative the province would prefer to prevail. Cynics would say that the greenbelt is only in favour with the government because there is no tangible dollar cost to the government in announcing a freeze, especially as Minister Gerretsen has announced publicly that there will be no compensation to those whose land has been frozen. It is a no-cost way to live up to the spirit of some of the pre-election promises made by the provincial Liberals. On the other hand, there is the federal Liberal government's commitment to keep immigration at the quarter-million mark per annum. With over half of new immigrants opting to settle in the GTA, this means the GTA municipalities must find additional housing for 125,000 people each year.

It's a thorny issue. Those of us lucky enough to live the pastoral life would like to see that continue. In that

regard, the farmers and the environmentalists are of one mind. Where we differ is in the fine print. Farmers, and I am one, love the land. We preserve the land and hold it in trust for the next generation. What we can't stomach is being told what to do with our land, as if our ownership counted for nothing. Proponents of the greenbelt suggest that if there were no freeze, there would be a stampede of farmers trying to turn their unprofitable fields into valuable subdivisions. This is patently false. With or without the greenbelt, there is no mechanism that allows for free-for-all development.

We in Halton spent the best part of the last decade buffing up the Halton urban structural plan, a fine piece of planning that sets the limits of development in Halton for the next two decades. Essentially, under HUSP, any land that is not already zoned urban residential has little or no chance of being rezoned before the year 2025. Any land that is already zoned is outside the arms of the proposed Greenbelt Act.

What difference will the Greenbelt Act make? In practical terms, almost none. In large part, what we see with the Greenbelt Act is a clash of cultures. Pressures of urban living are forcing more and more people to re-evaluate their lives and prompt them to seek a more relaxed and gentler existence. Unfortunately, the dream of country living is not quite the same as the reality. When one is busy signing the real estate offer, there are no explanatory clauses in the document about wells, septic systems, fence maintenance, the noxious weeds act and smells and sounds from neighbours, who are an even bet to be working farmers. Waking up on your first blissful morning to the sounds of a harvest in full swing when you're not expecting it is likely to try the sweetest temperament. On the other hand, being a working farmer suddenly confronted on the busiest day of the year by a brand new and now irate neighbour who wants you to stop working is also not likely to bring out your sunny side.

Some time ago, someone came up with the idea that the way to keep such confrontations to a minimum was to set a suitable distance between farmer and non-farming neighbours. This became minimum distance separation legislation and was enshrined in law. What was originally intended to protect the working farmer from needless harassment turned around to bite the farmer. What had kept neighbours from building too close to farms was now used in some cases to restrict any further growth in the farm operation because that would now contravene the MDS calculations. In at least one instance in the last year, a Halton farmer has been forced to give up his live-stock operation because of opposition from neighbours.

We've seen huge changes in the face of agriculture in Halton in the last decade. Halton agricultural land is expensive from a rural perspective. Anything costlier than \$1,500 an acre is too expensive to farm profitably. Land in Halton is anything up to \$15,000 an acre. It is said that in order to survive, a farmer must have some form of off-farm income. The joke now doing the rounds is that such off-farm income is Bay Street. Actually,

that's fairly close to the truth. At \$15,000 an acre and with farms in the 50- to 100-acre size range, only investment bankers can afford them.

Why not buy smaller farms, you might ask? Ah, good question. To divide a property, one needs the permission of the municipality and the region and the blessing of the Halton agricultural advisory committee, HAAC. This blessing is only given once in a lifetime to a working farmer for he or she to separate off just enough land to build a retirement dwelling, keeping the bulk of the farm intact. The result is that Halton is blessed with fairly large, very expensive farms. Either the new owners rent out the land to large-scale cash crop farmers at nominal sums just to keep it farmed and to keep the weeds down or they convert to horse operations.

And horses are cool. One can brag fairly enthusiastically about the number of horses one has on the farm. It doesn't quite have the same cachet if you substitute the word "pig" for "horse." It is now estimated that there are more horses in the region of Halton than in the entire state of Kentucky.

The reality is that traditional farming is becoming more and more difficult in a high-land-cost area like Halton. Will the greenbelt depress land values, and by what extent? The simple truth is nobody knows. What is certain is that land outside the greenbelt area is now attracting a lot of attention from speculators and their values have risen. In case you're not aware, that farmland is superior in quality to that in Halton, which is modest at best. Why would we protect the modest farmland and sacrifice the high-quality land? It raises doubts about the avowed purpose of the greenbelt being to save agriculture. It plants suspicions in the minds of farmers that the greenbelt is really an excuse to provide parkland contiguous to the GTA at no cost.

The idea of a greenbelt is utopian. Everyone loves the green fields and hedgerows of rural Halton, but to preserve them requires an ongoing viability of the local economy. Where are the farm equipment specialists? Not in Halton. To fix a tractor, one has to float it out, adding 300 bucks to the final bill. Farming in Halton is not only expensive, it's inconvenient.

Urban pressure is too great to ignore. The influx of people has to go somewhere. We can either be proactive and have carefully planned growth like the Places to Grow initiative or we can adopt the Greenbelt Act and have that growth leapfrog into what is still viable farmland. The Greenbelt Act will not make any difference to the preservation of land in Halton. We already have that covered under the planning and zoning restrictions. If you don't believe me, try getting your farm rezoned urban residential. The negative effect of the greenbelt will be to push developers to amass land inventories in the outlying areas where there may be no formal structural plan to hinder new building. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Baker. We have two minutes for each party, beginning with Ms. Churley.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much for your presentation—last but not least. I don't necessarily agree with

everything you said, but on the other hand I'm not trying to live my life as a farmer.

One of the things I did want to ask you about, and there are many points you made, is the leapfrog development, because that is very definitely an area where we agree. We're hearing that what's happening, not surprisingly, is that the land that is in that strip outside the greenbelt—the land value on the farms in that area is actually going through the roof—

Mr. Baker: Yes, it is.

Ms. Churley:—yet the farmland within the greenbelt is devalued. So would you agree it's really important, if this goes ahead—and I support going ahead with the greenbelt, but I don't support leaving all kinds of that swath of land out—that in fairness that should be included in the greenbelt?

I suppose for somebody who doesn't support going ahead with the greenbelt that's not an easy question to answer, but if it is going to go ahead, would that make it fairer?

Mr. Baker: I think you're trying to protect the wrong land. The difficulty from my point of view is that the land is already protected. Painting it with a greenbelt and saying that you're going to put this veneer over it and eradicate what is a faint-hope clause that some day the farm is going to be a subdivision and the descendants of the farmer are going to have their pension, as it were—if you eliminate that, then what you do is you're eliminating it in the minds of the developers. If you say, "OK, well, let's push out the greenbelt and move it out," how far out do you move it? As far as you have the greenbelt, wherever the edge comes is where the development is going to be.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Baker. From the government side, Ms. Van Bommel.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Thank you for your presentation. I have a lot of questions that came up in my mind on this one as I was going through. Where I want to start is, twice in here you talk about the fact that Halton already has relatively restrictive land use planning policies in place.

Mr. Baker: Yes, it does.

Mrs. Van Bommel: You're saying that it would not make any difference in the preservation of the land in Halton. So I'm kind of confused, because I would see that the one complements the other, then. I don't quite understand why you would be concerned about the greenbelt supporting what Halton has already done.

Mr. Baker: What I'm saying is that the greenbelt doesn't add anything of benefit to the protection of the land in Halton. All that it does is eliminate in the minds of everybody that there is any chance that that is the next logical step in terms of development. So what happens is, wherever the greenbelt ends is where the developers are going to push and where you're going to get expansion. So the greenbelt doesn't do anything except endanger the land outside of the greenbelt area.

Mrs. Van Bommel: So if the greenbelt boundary were to come before Halton, and Halton has these re-

strictive land use policies in place, where would it then—I'm just trying to visualize what—

The Chair: He has 10 seconds to answer this question.

Mr. Baker: OK.

The Chair: Time's up.

Mr. Baker: Sorry. I forgot the question.

Mrs. Van Bommel: I didn't mean to stump you.

Mr. Baker: No, that's fine.

The Chair: The official opposition; Mrs. Munro.

Mrs. Munro: I'll try to give you another question that perhaps is a little easier. You mention in the last part of your presentation that you're obviously supportive of the theory behind planned growth in Places to Grow. Given the conversation that has taken place as a result of your presentation, is it fair to say that possibly the government viewed introducing the greenbelt legislation as easier than the Places to Grow? So many people have talked about the need to have both at the same time. The government has chosen not to do that. It just occurred to me from your presentation, is it because this is easier?

Mr. Baker: It's always easier to say no than it is to plan something positive. That's the difficulty you have. To say no is just a negative, frankly, which irritates the living daylights out of everybody. Even if you bring the

greenbelt in, it really doesn't address the real underlying problem, which is the immigration that's coming in. For heaven's sake, the HUSP plan that we worked 10 years on only takes account of 120,000 additional people coming into Halton. There are 125,000 immigrants coming into the GTA every year. We have to take cognizance of that fact. To turn around to the municipalities and say, "Well, wonderful, guys. Here you're going to house all these people, but, by the way, you can't build any new subdivisions," is ludicrous. I'm not advocating—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Baker. Your time has expired. Thank you very much for your thoughtful presentation. We're grateful you came today.

This brings us to the close of our hearings for the day. I'd like to thank all of our witnesses, the MPPs and ministry staff for participating in our hearings today. I'd like to remind members who are travelling by bus tomorrow to our Grimsby hearing that the bus will be leaving at 7:30 a.m. from the east doors of the Legislative Building at Queen's Park. It's a little bit later than it was: 7:30, east doors.

This committee stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow in Grimsby.

The committee adjourned at 1738.

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