



November 30, 2023

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Submitted via email: greenbeltconsultation@ontario.ca

Re: Conservation Ontario's Comments on the "Proposal to return lands to the Greenbelt - Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023 (ERO #019-7739) and the "New Act regarding the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve easements and covenants" (ERO #019-7735)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the "Proposal to return lands to the Greenbelt - Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023" (ERO #019-7739) and the "New Act regarding the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve easements and covenants" (ERO #019-7735).

Conservation Ontario represents the network of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities (CAs). These comments should not limit consideration of comments by individual Conservation Authorities throughout the review and consultation process.

Conservation Ontario supports the Province's decision to introduce legislation restoring 15 parcels of land that were redesignated or removed from the Greenbelt in late 2022. We also support maintaining lands added to the Greenbelt in 2022.

Protection of these systems and their functions is crucial to supporting a balanced and vibrant economy that meets growing housing and development pressures in Ontario, while balancing the needs to manage risks of natural hazards on development, protecting sources of drinking water, and protecting agricultural lands for local food production.

The Greenbelt provides a significant level of protection to the agricultural land base, natural heritage, and water resource systems that are required to support ecological and human health and climate impacts in Ontario. Conservation Ontario is supportive of proposed amendments to establish designated Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine lands directly in legislation and increase transparency by requiring the approval of the Ontario legislature for future proposed boundary changes. It is essential that any proposed changes are transparent and include opportunities for robust public consultation.

Regarding the proposed *Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, 2023*, Conservation Ontario supports proposed legislation to enact the *Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, 2023* and continued protection of easements and covenants applicable to the lands covered by the *Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, 2005*.

Conservation Authorities, as local watershed agencies, provide valuable support to implement Greenbelt Plan objectives, and help partners, Municipalities, and the Province reach their overall outcomes of the Plan (e.g., through their mandatory programs and services regarding flooding and other natural hazards, as service providers to Municipalities, and as the second largest landowner in Ontario).

Conservation Ontario and Conservation Authorities across the Province remain committed to working with the Province and municipalities to address housing supply needs and achieve specific housing targets, while protecting public health and safety and the environment. We welcome further discussion with the Province on ways to leverage CA expertise to address these ongoing needs.

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Sincerely,

Angela Coleman

Angela Coleman
General Manager

c.c. all CA CAOs/GMs