

# Hands Off the Greenbelt!

Virtual Town Hall Summary Report

November 2022

On November 30, 2022, MPP Bhutla Karpoche hosted a Hands Off the Greenbelt: Virtual Town Hall. She was joined by Keith Brooks, Programs Director at Environmental Defence. Together, they provided attendees with an overview of current legislation pertaining to the Greenbelt, what Bhutla and her caucus colleagues are doing, and how people can get involved in protecting the Greenbelt. The following information summarizes key points discussed during the virtual town hall and action items to help you get involved.

## **The Housing Crisis in Ontario**

- Affordable housing crisis → creation of Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force (only mandated to look at “market solutions”) → Task Force Report with 55 recommendations → Build 1.5 million homes.
- The latest language around housing has gone from affordable housing crisis to housing supply crisis.
- The government has been trying to rationalize the attack on the Greenbelt as a measure to deliver more homes.

## **Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022***

- Create a process for selling off conservation lands without oversight
- Strip conservation authority powers which protect us from floods
- Remove protections from woodlands, wetlands and wildlife habitat
- Cancel municipal green building standards
- Will only deliver 50,000 of the 1.5 million new homes that are needed
- They have delivered far less in terms of getting rid of exclusionary zoning than what environmental organizations, housing supply advocates, tenant groups and housing affordability advocates have been asking for
- The bill seems to rely on the same costly “tall and sprawl” development to get it done
- Does almost nothing to build more affordable homes inside of our cities and towns where they are needed

## **The Greenbelt**

- 2018: During the election, an online video of Premier Ford promising to open up a “big chunk” of greenland surfaced. Public backlash quickly prompted Premier Ford to retract his statement and he promised not to touch the Greenbelt.
- 2020: The Ford government stripped power from Conservation Authorities, gutting environmental protections. Nearly the entire Greenbelt Council resigned in protest, saying that the changes put the Greenbelt at risk.
- 2021: The Ford government made plans to build a superhighway, with widespread opposition, that slashes through the Greenbelt.
- 2022: The Ford government is proposing to take 7400 acres of land out of the Greenbelt.
- Certain developers, who are also donors to the PC party, bought large swaths of land in the Greenbelt. These lands, since they were protected, were "undevelopable" when purchased. Now that those areas are going to be cut from the Greenbelt, not only do we lose prime farmlands and conservation lands, these developers stand to make enormous profits by developing on these lands.

**The Official Opposition has formally requested the Auditor General launch an investigation into the cuts to the Greenbelt.**

## **The key areas we've asked for the AG to investigate are:**

- Conduct a value-for-money audit investigating how much wealth would be increased for the property owners when their lands are removed from the Greenbelt, thereby enabling profitable rezoning, and whether this wealth transfer is in the interest of the public.
- Investigate the economic and environmental impact on the agricultural and natural systems if parts of the Greenbelt were to be developed.
- Consider Sections 2 and 3 of the Members' Integrity Act, which deal with MPP conflict of interest and the sharing of insider information and refer any evidence of misconduct to the appropriate authorities.

## **TAKE ACTION**

- Visit Environmental Defence's website for the latest updates on their campaign: <https://environmentaldefence.ca/handsoffthegreenbelt/>
- Sign Environmental Defence's *Hands Off the Greenbelt* petition: [https://act.environmentaldefence.ca/page/117064/action/1?ea.tracking.id=googleadword&qclid=Cj0KCQiAm5ycBhCXARIsAPIdzoX0V-jlboyBI3JHfD-OaPHU-CgEhdEVuZ6IDYtITGpHrpIomx86Oc0aAlrkEALw\\_wcB](https://act.environmentaldefence.ca/page/117064/action/1?ea.tracking.id=googleadword&qclid=Cj0KCQiAm5ycBhCXARIsAPIdzoX0V-jlboyBI3JHfD-OaPHU-CgEhdEVuZ6IDYtITGpHrpIomx86Oc0aAlrkEALw_wcB)

## Office of Bhutla Karpoche, MPP

- Read more information on the proposed amendments to the Greenbelt plan:  
<https://ero.ontario.ca/search?search=proposed+amendment+to+the+greenbelt+act&date%5Bmin%5D=&date%5Bmax%5D=>
- Add your name to MPP Bhutla Karpoche's digital petition:  
[bhutilakarpocha.ca/protect-the-greenbelt](https://bhutilakarpocha.ca/protect-the-greenbelt)

### Contact the Office of Bhutla Karpoche, MPP

We're here to help! Contact Bhutla's office for assistance with any provincial matter.

T: 416-763-5630  
E: BKarpocha-CO@ndp.on.ca  
**BhutilaKarpocha.ca**