

# Greenbelt and the Climate

Virtual Environment Town Hall Summary Report

February 2023

On February 2, 2023, MPP Bhutla Karpoche hosted a Greenbelt and Climate Change Virtual Town Hall. She was joined by MPP Sol Mamakwa, Deputy Grand Council Chief James Marsden of the Anishinabek Nation, and climate and racial justice activist Fatin Chowdhury. Together, they provided attendees with an overview of Greenbelt-related developments since the previous town hall meeting in November, 2022, shared Indigenous perspectives on this critical issue, and highlighted key action steps people can take to get involved in protecting the Greenbelt and the environment. Breakout rooms were held for attendees to voice their ideas and feedback.

The following summarizes key points discussed, feedback from attendees, and action items to help you get involved:

## Latest Developments

- After the Ontario NDP's formal request for an investigation, Ontario's Integrity Commissioner and Ontario's Auditor General have both agreed to an open investigation into the Ford government's action on the Greenbelt.
- Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) [is currently reviewing requests](#) from environmental groups and members of the public to determine if there are grounds for an investigation into the development of the Greenbelt lands.
- The federal Minister of Environment has said that the federal government could intervene in the province's cuts to the Greenbelt by looking at "the potential use of federal tools to stop some of these projects."
- There have been 85 rallies since November opposing development of the Greenbelt.

## From the Panel

- The Greenbelt makes up the home of countless animals, critters, plants, and vital parts of our ecosystem. Destruction of any part of it may do irreparable harm to the environment and these species.
- Greenbelt development is a concern for all of us and we have a collective responsibility to preserve this land. This development would have systemic, dire consequences for future generations.
- The Ford government has not consulted with First Nations communities, disregarding the history of this land, and making decisions without jurisdiction. This is an unacceptable abuse of power.

- If Bill 23 takes effect and destruction of the Greenbelt continues, development in Ontario would be completely unrestricted.

### **Breakout room Feedback**

Over 100 passionate and determined community members joined this virtual town hall to share their thoughts, feedback, and ideas on what we can do to tackle this problem. Here are some of the powerful ideas from the group:

#### **We NEED...**

- More Indigenous land steward groups
- More urgency in our messaging and communication about the Greenbelt
- Indigenous voices centered and speaking for the importance of the Greenbelt land, ecosystems, nature, critters, and animals
- A clear timeline- when do we intervene and how do we do it?
- Need to publicize knowledge of Bill 23- this legislation cuts BACK on affordable housing and takes us further away from it, not closer to it.
- More education and resources to share with members' communities (older adults, schools, clubs, local organizations).
- Opportunities for folks to intervene actively and counter feelings of helplessness

#### **Increased OUTREACH**

- How can we use the map of the Greenbelt for public education purposes? What would the 7,400 acre change to GB look like and who would be impacted?
- We are in our own bubble "preaching to the choir"- how do we talk to other people and get the word out about this issue to people who are not already involved?
- Suggestions for discussing this issue in different forums included possible collaboration with local community activist groups, organizations, and public spaces like Seniors for Climate Action and the Royal Ontario Museum.
- How do we use mainstream media resources to amplify our voices?

### **TAKE ACTION**

- Join the Welcome Back Rally at Queen's Park on Saturday, Feb 25th:  
<https://environmentaldefence.ca/handsoffthegreenbelt/#rallies>
- Follow our panel speakers and leaders:
  - Learn more about MPP Sol Mamakwa, [@solmamakwa](https://www.greenpac.ca/2022ontarioendorsees/sol-mamakwa)
  - Learn more about the Anishinabek Nation and Chief James Marsden  
<https://www.anishinabek.ca/education-resources/>

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- Learn more about Fatin Chowdhury, [@fatinic](https://www.facebook.com/fatinic) & <https://www.westnh.org/about-us/community-development-public-policy-advocacy/>
- Learn more about Ana Teresa from <https://parkdalepeopleseconomy.ca/>
- Learn more the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation <https://www.algonquinsofpikwakanagan.com/pikwakanagan-lands/>
- Visit Environmental Defence's website for the latest updates on their campaign: <https://environmentaldefence.ca/handsoffthegreenbelt/>
- Find my MP: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en>
- Write a letter to your MP: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en/search>
- Sign Environmental Defence's Hands Off the Greenbelt petition: [https://act.environmentaldefence.ca/page/117064/action/1?ea.tracking.id=googleadword&gclid=Cj0KCQiAm5ycBhCXARIsAPIdzoX0V-jlboyBI3JHfD-OaPHU-CgEhdEVuZ6IDYtITGpHrpIomx86Oc0aAlrkEALw\\_wcB](https://act.environmentaldefence.ca/page/117064/action/1?ea.tracking.id=googleadword&gclid=Cj0KCQiAm5ycBhCXARIsAPIdzoX0V-jlboyBI3JHfD-OaPHU-CgEhdEVuZ6IDYtITGpHrpIomx86Oc0aAlrkEALw_wcB)
- Add your name to MPP Bhutla Karpoche's digital petition: <https://www.bhutilakarpoche.ca/protect-the-greenbelt>
- Learn more about the Greenbelt Foundation: <https://www.greenbelt.ca/about>
- Learn more about the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance: <https://www.greenbeltalliance.ca/>
- Toronto Environmental Alliance <https://www.torontoenvironment.org>
- Government of Ontario Website Page – Ontario's Greenbelt <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-greenbelt>
- Greenbelt Your Action <https://www.greenbeltya.ca/>
  - <https://beachmetro.com/2022/12/21/riverdale-collegiate-students-hold-walkout-protest-against-greenbelt-development-plans/>

Watch the recording of our virtual town hall:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bud\\_B5y2y9g&ab\\_channel=BhutilaKarpoche](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bud_B5y2y9g&ab_channel=BhutilaKarpoche)

For more background information from the previous town hall, please visit:

[https://assets.nationbuilder.com/ondpcaucus37/pages/170/attachments/original/1670282227/Hands\\_Off\\_the\\_Greenbelt\\_Town\\_Hall\\_Summary.pdf?1670282227](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/ondpcaucus37/pages/170/attachments/original/1670282227/Hands_Off_the_Greenbelt_Town_Hall_Summary.pdf?1670282227)

### 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: [BKarpoche-CO@ndp.on.ca](mailto:BKarpoche-CO@ndp.on.ca)

**[BhutilaKarpoche.ca](https://www.bhutilakarpoche.ca)**