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Dear Distinguished members of Town Council,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the removal of protection of the Oak Ridges Morane to allow development for more sprawling residential neighbourhoods.

There are already many cuts to the protections of our wetlands and forests done by the provincial government in the last few years. These already were concerning as there has been a constant attempt at developing protected areas before the lifting of restrictions. We can look at the issues Aurora has had with companies clear cutting land without permission and paying the fines as it is just a small cost to them on their path to profits.

We know there is a large deficit of affordable housing in the entirety of southern Ontario, however opening up this protected land will do little to relieve that problem. The densification of the Yonge/Davis corridor has barely begun and really should be focused on to increase affordability in the area. Bringing more single family detached homes will still be far out of the reach of first time home buyers and will just put more money into the pockets of the already wealthy.

This protected land is necessary for the future of our community. There are now water futures being traded on the stock exchange for some areas of California. Potable water, which has been declared a human right by the UN, is going to become rarer in the future. We are in a privileged place in the world with some of the best and largest reserves of fresh water. There are already exploitation schemes with bottled water companies taking water from the water table for outrageous profits. Do we want to put that in more danger by developing more of the area that is needed to filter that water? Please also remember that “people are rights-holders and States are duty-bearers of providing water and sanitation services. Rights-holders can claim their rights and duty-bearers must guarantee the rights to water and sanitation equally and without discrimination.” (<https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/human-rights/>). You have an obligation on this level to keep that guarantee for us citizens.

We also need natural spaces for us to experience nature and to allow the animals that live here among us to continue to exist. Biodiversity is already crashing down at an alarming rate and just last year the mass of human produced materials may have exceeded that of the entirety of the worlds biomass. (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-3010-5> , <https://vermecology.wordpress.com/2017/02/12/nature-article-to-commemorate-charles-darwins-birthday-on-12th-feb/>).

I witnessed myself how we do not have enough green spaces and trails last year during the Covid restrictions. I took my children on a bike ride on the Nokiidaa trail and looking at how full it was we can see we need more areas like this.

I hope for a future where there will be minimal impact on our remaining natural areas and think we should be innovating instead of using the same old model that has been used for the past 60 or so years. If we let this go through it will be the point of a wedge to let more development happen in more protected areas. We don't need to continue the idea of making more jobs at the cost of these protected areas. It is plain to see that the jobs generated will only be minimal and short term while building. We already see the excuses for removing the protections on areas in the moraine as nothing more than cronyism by the provincial government to pad their friends and colleagues wallets. Even using Covid as an excuse is seen as nothing more than a tool to meet developers wants and they will not be forgotten when we have the next election. The people are aware of the situations and the next generation is even more so and *will* demand justice.

Thank you for your time listening to our opinions and please remember that there is a duty and obligation to serve the people in this community and secure a better future for all of us.

Simon Schmidt