



**ONTARIO
RIVERS
ALLIANCE**

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Protecting Water – Proteger l'eau Consultations
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Local Government and Planning Policy Division
Provincial Planning Policy Branch
777 Bay Street, Floor 13
Toronto, ON
M5G 2E5

By Email:

Dear Sirs:

Re: EBR-013-1661 – Protecting Water for Future Generations:
Growing the Greenbelt in the Outer Ring

Ontario Rivers Alliance (ORA) is a Not-for-Profit grassroots organization acting as a voice for several stewardships, associations, citizens and Indigenous peoples who have come together to protect, conserve and restore riverine ecosystems.

ORA is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Growing the Greenbelt in the Outer Ring - a policy proposal to grow the Greenbelt to protect moraines, rivers, streams, wetlands, headwater areas, aquifers and ground water features across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and beyond.

ORA supports the provinces approach to safeguard the quality and quantity of our finite water resources. Clean and healthy water is essential to life, and to the success of any region. Protecting our freshwater from urban sprawl and development that would compromise our natural environment is vital to community health. Environmental resilience is essential in the face of a dramatically changing climate with its associated impacts from flooding, drought and extreme weather events.

Unfortunately, water protection is not equal across the province; therefore, ORA submits that this proposal, and other provincial initiatives, must go much further to protect freshwater resources throughout all of Ontario. This is especially important in areas of intense mining or industrial development.

Greenbelt designation should not only be dependent upon population density but must also consider development type and density. Industry, mining and hydroelectric development can have major impacts on water quality and quantity, and has in many areas across the north. We must do more to make all of Ontario resilient to the impacts of climate change.

We simply cannot afford to pave over landscape features which store, filter or supply our water.

ORA recommends a comprehensive water strategy for all of Ontario, one that assesses gaps and opportunities within the existing legal framework and provides for safe and clean water for vulnerable communities and future generations.

Road salt is another issue that is quickly becoming a major issue for many freshwater lakes and rivers. High amounts of chloride pollution can be corrosive and damaging to infrastructure and personal

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property, and sodium levels can create a potential drinking risk for those people with hypertension. Addressing the use of road salts in a changing climate is becoming increasingly urgent.

ORA recommends the review, integration and management of substances that are harmful to aquatic life, including sodium and chloride pollution from the application of road salt.

As we press the government to better protect this province's water resources, several cities around the world are on the brink of running out of water. Cape Town, South Africa is the first major city facing the loss of its drinking water. Their taps could be turned off as early as this spring. But there are [11 other major cities](#) that are also facing a water scarcity. Let's ensure no Ontario city is added to the list!

In conclusion, ORA supports any potential expansion of the Greenbelt, either in the “outer ring” of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and/or more importantly throughout many northern areas that have and are experiencing heavy mining development, and climate impacts.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment!

Respectfully,

Linda Heron
Chair, Ontario Rivers Alliance
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