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RE: GROWING THE GREENBELT/PROTECTING THE OAK RIDGES MORAINE

York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA) is a co-signer of a joint submission on Growing the Greenbelt but I would like to share some cautionary information on what has transpired in the 44 years I have lived in Richmond Hill. I was part of the local citizen rebellion of 1999 in opposition to the outrageous pro-developer OPA129 for Oak Ridges which resulted in a provincial moratorium on development and the subsequent Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. That plan is still in place to avoid this happening again yet we have rapacious developer/landowner lobbyists dead set on making Swiss cheese of the Greenbelt/Oak Ridges Moraine without any thought to the consequences and legacy they would leave for future generations.



*Algae contamination - East Humber River, Lake Wilcox*

#### OAK RIDGES MORAINE & GREENBELT WATERSHED PROTECTION

One of the Oak Ridges Moraine's most important functions is that it acts as a water recharge and discharge system. Paving it over with high density housing & infrastructure needs to be considered within the context of past mistakes. After sewers were installed in the 1980s in Oak Ridges running east/west along North Lake Road toward

Yonge, the gravel sewer bed wicked away the recharge water of the Humber Watershed that fed Lake Wilcox. This caused a dramatic decline in water quality of the lake. Channels had to be built to try to restore the recharge function. A lake lung was installed to try to clean up toxic blue green algae to no avail. It actually made it worse.

Another development in the Humber Watershed in Oak Ridges had to dewater 24/7 for two full years. Developments such as this were grandfathered as speculators quickly put in applications before the ORMCP came into effect.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue sewer affected over 100 wells in Stouffville up to 15kms away. Major dewatering was required due to construction delays caused by deficient initial environmental assessments. Water that should be recharging the Rouge Watershed is to this day being wicked into the Pickering sewer system and the Rouge Watershed is still being adversely impacted. Yet there are repeated requests to convert land on the Greenbelt/ORM to settlement on Leslie St & Stouffville Rd. right at the Rouge Headwaters. Paving over Moraine watersheds will contribute to more flooding and deprive us of clean drinking water on which millions of Ontarians depend.

#### CONSERVING & EXPANDING FARMLAND

When we were denied masks during the current pandemic, It was full steam ahead to initiate local manufacturing. This pandemic has also magnified the importance of local food security. If we are being denied face masks, what will happen when climate change and drought reduce agricultural capacity in the US? We could just as easily be denied food. Therefore it is essential that our farmland be expanded and conserved for growing healthy local organic food to meet the needs of our communities and not redesignated for more suburban sprawl and bedroom communities, a model of the 1950s that should have been shelved decades ago.

After attending the YORK REGION GREENBELT EXPANSION CONSULTATION hosted by MPP Parsa, and hearing him reiterate the government's commitment to not approve MZOs or land conversions in the Greenbelt/ORM, YREA is reassured that lobbyists seeking development in the Rouge Headwaters and elsewhere on the Greenbelt/Oak Ridges Moraine will finally realize NO MEANS NO. Thank you!

With sincere gratitude

Gloria Marsh, Executive Director

York Region Environmental Alliance

*Partnering for a greener planet*