

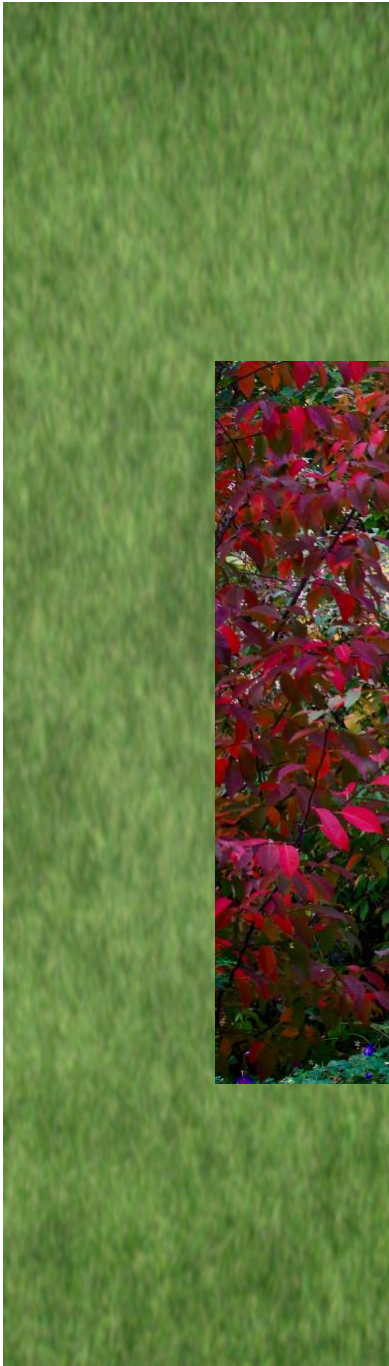


# York Region Environmental Alliance

*Advocating for green energy alternatives,  
pollinators, waste reduction; raising awareness -  
pesticides & GMOs, ecological responsibility*

2023

# Annual Report



# YORK REGION ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE

## WHO WE ARE

Incorporated in 2002 to campaign against the cosmetic use of pesticides, York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA), a registered charitable organization since 2008 #: 84559 0553 RR0001 has continually expanded its mandate to address ecological issues that impact our health and the health of our environment. We engage the public at community events and virtually through YREA's very popular quarterly e-news (over 800 subscribers) our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page (over 500 followers).

York Region Environmental Alliance is governed and administered by a volunteer board of directors. We employ an arm's length accounting service to provide an annual financial statement.

## 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF



**Gloria Marsh, Executive Director**  
**Susan Sigrist, President/Chair**  
**Sylvia Halligan, Secretary**  
**Donna Pearson**  
**Liz Beesley, Joyfully Organic Farm**

**Patty Ella, Accountant,**  
**PME Management Solutions**

## INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge that we are located on the ancestral lands, sacred gathering places and traditional territories of many First Nations including the Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples. First Nations, because they were here first, inhabiting this land for more than 20,000 years.

There are over 30,000 place names in Canada that are of Indigenous origin. These are often descriptive of the location named because of the inseparable spiritual connection First Nations have to not only land but also to water, air, plants and animals. They view their environment as sacred and feel a responsibility for its preservation for future generations. May we follow the example of Indigenous peoples to honour and protect this Earth we call home.



## PLANTING FOR POLLINATORS

YREA launched our pollinator awareness campaign, including handouts with the following information:

- Replace some of your lawn with plants for pollinators. You will give birds, bees, butterflies, insects & other creatures a home.
- A mix of shrubs, perennials, native plants & annuals will do it.
- Do NOT use any pesticides or chemical fertilizers which may kill or harm pollinators. Use compost instead.
- Turn off outdoor lighting when you come in at night. It interferes with insect & bird navigation, reproduction & ability to find food.
- In the fall, leave the leaves & plant stems for overwintering insects & for bird nest building in spring.
- Why? We need to do this because of loss of larval hosts; forage, overwintering & nesting habitat loss; the use of pesticides.

### PERENNIALS:

Anise hyssop – *Agastache*  
 Bergamot - *Monarda*  
 Blazing Star - *Liatris spicata*  
 Blue lobelia - *Lobelia siphilitica*  
 Brown & Black eyed Susan - *Rudbeckia*  
 Cardinal flower- *Lobelia cardinalis*  
 Coreopsis – *Coreopsis lanceolata*  
 Geranium Rozanne  
 Joe Pye Weed- *Eutrochium*  
 Milkweeds – *Asclepias* varieties  
 New England Aster – *Symphyotrichum*  
 Obedient plant - *Physostegia virginiana*  
 Pearly Everlasting - *Anaphalis margarita*.  
 Purple Coneflower- *Echinacea*  
 Vervain – *Verbena hastata*  
 Wild columbine – *Aquilegia canadensis*  
 Yarrow - *Achillea millefolium*

### ANNUALS & COME BY CHANCE:

Alyssum, Aster, Bachelor's Buttons, Begonia,  
 Calendula, Celosia, Cleome, Cosmos, Dahlias,  
 Daisy, Dandelion, Geranium, Goldenrod,  
 Marigold, Nasturtium, Nicotiana, Queen  
 Anne's Lace, Petunia, Saliva, Sunflowers, Zinnia

### HERBS:

Basil, Borage, Catnip, Chamomile, Chives,  
 Cilantro, Dill, Fennel, Lavender  
 Lemon Balm, Parsley, Oregano, Rosemary,  
 Sage, Thyme

### SHRUBS & TREES:

Canada Plum - *Prunus nigra*  
 Cherry - *Prunus serotina*  
 Chokeberry – *Aronia melanocarpa*  
 Chokecherry – *Prunus virginiana*  
 Eastern Redbud – *Cercis canadensis*  
 Elderberry – *Sambucus canadensis*  
 Flowering Dogwood – *Cornus florida*  
 Gray Dogwood – *Cornus racemosus*  
 Hawthorn – *Crataegus species*  
 Meadowsweet - *Spirea alba*  
 Northern Catalpa – *Catalpa speciosa*  
 Ohio Buckeye – *Aesculus glabra*  
 Serviceberry - *Amelanchier*  
 Showy Mountain Ash - *Sorbus decora*  
 St. john's Wort - *Hypericum kalmianum*  
 Sumac - *Rhus typhina*  
 Summersweet - *Clethra hummingbird*  
 Trembling Aspen – *Populus tremuloides*



This campaign urges us to stop worrying about the environment, climate crisis & instead DO something about these by taking personal action. The changes we all make collectively to green our choices can add up to a sizeable dent in our carbon footprint. Check off as many of the boxes below as you can –

- I will read labels & choose more sustainable products certified as organic, Energy Star, FSC, Fair Trade, EcoLogo or C2C (cradle to cradle)
- I will consider borrowing, renting, repairing or buying used & refurbished instead of buying new
- **CLOTHING**
  - I will ask myself if I really NEED to buy each item I consider purchasing
  - I will re-evaluate my wardrobe and avoid impulse purchases
  - I will consider more sustainable fibres such as organic cotton, linen, hemp & recycled polyester
  - I will first visit a consignment or second hand store the next time I need clothing
  - I will recycle textiles & clothing by donating to charities or at community drop off centres
- **HOME**
  - I will get an energy audit for my home
  - I will install a programmable thermostat
  - I will purchase my hydro, natural gas heating from Bullfrog Power, a green energy provider
  - I will convert my lighting to CFL or LED (best choice)
  - I will choose zero or low VOC or natural paints to improve indoor air quality
  - I will install a 3 litre low flush or dual flush toilet
  - I will install a tankless or solar water heater
- **HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS**
  - I will inform myself about the toxic substances that may be in my home
  - I will dispose of these at a hazardous waste facility if applicable
  - I will read the labels & choose products that will not be bad for my health & home environment
  - I will buy cold water unscented laundry detergent
  - I will use white vinegar as a window cleaner and fabric softener
  - I will use baking soda as an air freshener, drain cleaner & stain remover
  - I will switch from chlorine to oxygen bleach
- **PAPER**
  - I will purchase FSC paper products or paper with post-consumer recycled content
  - I will reduce paper use by converting to online newspapers, paperless banking & email communication
  - I will use both sides of a sheet of paper whenever possible
- **AVOID BUYING**
  - I will avoid buying bottled water, use a refillable container instead & if I have concerns about my tap water, I will install a water filtration system
  - I will avoid buying single use batteries, disposing of used batteries & electronics responsibly
  - View YREA's [SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING](#) presentation to learn more.

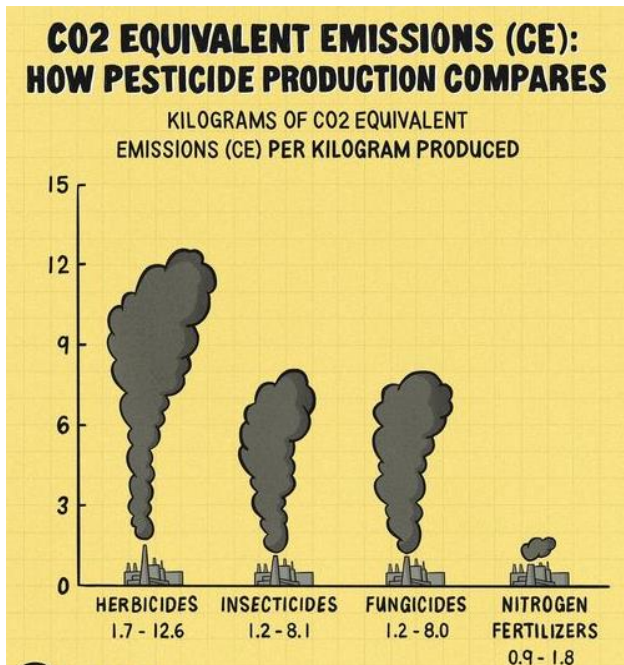
## 2023 ISSUES & ACTIVITIES - SUBMISSIONS TO GOVERNMENT

It has been another challenging year with communications and advocacy addressing many troubling matters. Independently, as well as jointly with other NGOs, YREA made numerous appeals provincially, municipally and federally on issues of concern. A sampling of abridged YREA submissions follow:

### BILL S-5 RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT UNDER CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (CEPA)

YREA submission to the federal government is in response to comments made during Bill S-5 meetings.

- Canada is NOT a leader in environmental protection. In fact, according to [Pan International](#), Canada has only banned 32 pesticides whereas the EU has banned 195 with an additional 269 not approved. It is highly likely we are just as behind on bans of many toxic substances including [coal tar sealants](#).
- Witnesses mentioned 'competitive disadvantage'. Yes, we are at a disadvantage but can easily stay competitive. We must align our laws with other countries such as Italy that has drastically reduced Canadian wheat imports because we allow 500 times more pesticide residue than they do. Canada needs to align with the EU's plan to halve pesticides by 2030 and with Mexico that has the fortitude to ban GMOs, choosing health over trade.
- NO watch list? How many thalidomide babies or babies [born without eyes](#) do we need before we use the precautionary principle and consider the health of people over profit?
- As humans are considered part of nature, solutions that address biodiversity loss and the climate crisis



will also confer benefits on human health. As Beatrice Olivastri, CEO of Friends of the Earth Canada so aptly said, '...the world needs a significant reduction in pesticide use and a shift to managing pests rather than the current outright war on all insects. CropLife is in the business of selling as much pesticide product as they can for profit. Their interests cannot align with those who seek to stop the damage, restore and conserve biodiversity. Governments should view CropLife and its members as polluters who must pay for the damage they're inflicting on our global biodiversity.'

- Reducing pesticides for a healthy environment is even more important than reducing fertilizers if we are to curb GHGE. Converting farmers to regenerative organic will further reduce GHGE by 40%.

- We strongly urge the labelling of GMO foods

without the 'bioengineered' greenwashing being used in the [USA since 2022](#).

### GOVERNEMENT OF CANADA FRESH WATER STUDY

Cleaning up our water requires a wholistic approach, with greater understanding and actions taken on numerous fronts to ensure safe drinking water, healthy watersheds and healthy ecosystems.

- An important study from the University of McGill - [The overlooked impact of rising glyphosate use on phosphorus loading in agricultural watersheds](#) clearly states that the use of **glyphosate adds**

**phosphorus (P)**, to agricultural landscapes, influencing accumulation and cycling of phosphorus in soil and nearby surface waters. Yet another compelling reason to ban this pesticide.

- If conventional farming transitioned to [regenerative organic](#) then excess nitrogen would not reach waterways through runoff. Nitrogen overstimulates the growth of algae, leaving dead-zones in ecosystems that cannot keep up with the accelerated growth.
- Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority has identified 28 pesticides in the Lake Simcoe watershed. This is not the only watershed in trouble. Transitioning away from conventional farming to a more sustainable regenerative system would not only improve water quality but also benefit people, pollinators and aquatic systems that are adversely impacted by these toxins.
- We need to [stop the spray of glyphosate](#) in the forestry industry right across Canada so that the water, foods and animals that Indigenous communities depend on for sustenance are protected.
- The use of glyphosate as a control for Phragmites in our waterways should be forbidden given that an [EPA report](#) states that this pesticide is ‘highly to very highly toxic’ to wildlife and endangered species of amphibians, reptiles, fish, aquatic invertebrates as well as to their habitats.
- Atrazine herbicide, one of the [worst endocrine disruptors](#), produces feminized fish, intersexual frogs and affects human cell lines. It is banned in 44 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America but can still be found in drinking water across Canada. By upholding Canada’s precautionary principle, we must become the 45<sup>th</sup> country.
- First Nations communities often have poor water quality due to metals entering drinking water through anthropogenic sources such as mining and smelting operations, paper processing and waste disposal. It is essential that the most stringent of environmental standards be upheld to protect these communities. See YREA’s letter in opposition to Ontario [mining amendments](#).
- Coal tar driveway sealants have a terrible impact on people, our environment and our water. Cities in the USA are suing coal tar sealant companies to recoup costly cleanups of local waterways that have been contaminated by deadly runoff. Please give [YREA’s 2022](#) submission to the federal consultation on this topic due consideration and implement a ban on this toxic substance. By so doing, we can eliminate yet another source of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), known carcinogens.

We, as citizens, can all do our part to keep our water clean. YREA provides a community handout to residents on what can be done locally. See [Clean Rivers, Clean Lakes = Clean Drinking Water](#)

## FEDERAL POLLUTION PREVENTION (P2) PLAN FOR PLASTIC FOOD PACKAGING

York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA) submits the following comments for consideration:

- **COMPOSTABLE BAGS** - There have been a number of products released to the marketplace erroneously professing to be biodegradable or compostable that have caused confusion for shoppers and contamination in our waste streams. While these products need to be eliminated, truly compostable bags are needed to line our kitchen green bins and might possibly replace plastic bags at fish and meat counters where butcher paper isn’t used.
- **PLASTIC MESH BAGS** that hold citrus and sweet potatoes when cut, shred bits of microplastics. Although these bags are preferable to wooden boxes (tangerines from Morocco are one example) a better material needs to be substituted.



- STICKERS found on loose organic fruit and vegetables are evolving to paper from plastic. This needs to continue. Strips encircling some organic produce could also change to paper (masking tape) instead of plastic.
- PAPER SHOPPING BAG transition was a huge mistake. The LCBO used 135 million paper bags annually. They will soon stop this, saving 188,000 trees each year. SAQ in Quebec eliminated single use plastic and paper bags back in 2009. It can easily be done. Organic cotton mesh shopping bags can be promoted for groceries. They are strong, washable and last over a decade.
- CELLOPHANE could replace plastic in many instances. It is compostable and can be obtained from biomaterials such as the invasive Phragmites. The [lyocell process](#) does not use toxic carbon disulfide and recovers 99% of the amino acids. This might be a worthwhile research investment. Cellophane could replace plastic packaging of bread, toilet paper, paper towels, multiple tissue boxes, diapers and many other products.

There are numerous issues to be resolved in our journey to reduce plastics and plastic pollution. YREA fully supports and commends the government for this important initiative.

### FEDERAL NOTICE OF INTENT NOI2023-01 AND CONSULTATION ON PMRL2023-34

York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA) strongly objects to PMRA intent to increase allowable pesticide MRL on any of our foods - domestic or imported. Protecting human and environmental health should be a priority. Instead, a recently released [scathing review](#) by the Institute of Environmental Sciences, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), says that ‘Canada continues to embrace industry narratives and biased evidence, by being receptive to industry demands, and by opaque decision making and lack of transparency, Health Canada’s PMRA promotes commercial interests over the imperatives of public health and environmental protection’. Truly shameful given that the response by the health minister to a petition of 18383 signatures from concerned Canadians to ban glyphosate was dismissed with the usual platitudes.

Important stakeholders including the [National Farmers Union](#) called for the resignation of CFIA president due to inappropriate collusion between CropLife Canada and CFIA. Even though we have new ministers of Health and Agriculture and a new CFIA President it is very troublesome to hear of [the resignation](#) of the esteemed Dr. Bruce Lanphear as co-chair and member of the PMRA’s Scientific Advisory Committee. In his letter he also attests that the new terms of reference are inadequate and states that industry representatives – **who have a clear and undeniable financial conflict of interest – should not be allowed to serve on the Pest Management Advisory Council or on any other advisory committees of federal health agencies.** He is undeniably correct and changes must be made.



A request by Bayer to increase glyphosate MRL and more recently, by CropLife to raise azoxystrobin and fludioxonil fungicide MRL in sugar beets is very troubling. Isn’t it bad enough that sugar beets are already genetically engineered to withstand glyphosate and to produce Bt, the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* in the plant cell without increasing fungicide residues? Given that sugar beet sweeteners saturate kids’ cereals, cookies, snack bars and beverages, does Canada not have any regard whatsoever for the health of our children? As

conventionally grown crops continue to become more and more resistant to pesticides, requests for raising MRL will become a constant occurrence as will the rise in human ailments which are inextricably linked to pesticide toxins in our food and water.

YREA also concurs that the PMRA only provides Canadians with false assurances regarding toxic pesticides. Has the government ever estimated the cost savings to health care, based on banning and reducing pesticide use? Monsanto/Bayer lawsuits paid out \$10.9b for glyphosate cancer claims, \$820m for PCB water pollution, \$400m for dicamba damage. The government needs to seriously consider the possibility of class action lawsuits in the future if more isn't done to protect Canadians' rights to a clean and healthy environment, which should also include clean and healthy food.

### **OPPOSITION TO ONTARIO MINING ACT AMENDMENTS – [ERO#019-6715](#)**

YREA adamantly opposes amendments to reduce mining company requirements to post bonds for clean-up costs, approve their own closure plans **without** government oversight and **lower** rehabilitation standards. Alternate uses that remain should benefit communities, social well-being, ecosystem restoration and carbon sequestration to counterbalance GHGE of operations. Mining activities negatively affect groundwater, surface water, soil, air quality, plants and animals, with serious implications for public health and safety. In fact, mining critical minerals has such an enormous ecological and public health risk that mining companies in other countries are required to follow strict environmental and restoration codes to ensure the mined area returns largely to its original state. Yet the Ontario government is doing the opposite with these amendments which will leave the communities with health risks and taxpayers bearing the costs (as is presently the case with abandoned oil wells in Alberta and Saskatchewan) rather than the mining companies that profited. **POLLUTER MUST PAY!** In the face of unprecedented and accelerating biodiversity loss and the ever-worsening climate crisis, your government must do its utmost to address these risks. Mining development in Ontario should proceed only with comprehensive plans for closure and rehabilitation in place, financial assurances that fully cover environmental and health liabilities, as well as the free, prior and informed consent of affected Indigenous communities. Otherwise adverse impacts including [mine tailings from abandoned sites](#) and the release of billions of tonnes of carbon, stored in Canada's northern peatlands will only exacerbate our climate crisis. YREA urges the government to withdraw the proposed changes to the Mining Act so we are not left with the deplorable burden of 'after' consequences, as shown.





## ONTARIO EROs INTENTION TO MODERNIZE STREAMLINING OF PERMITS

THIS IS NOT MODERNIZATION BUT A REGRESSION TO DARKER TIMES

**ERO 019-6951** Must not be implemented as it will weaken regulatory oversight, opening the floodgates to another Walkerton tragedy. The illnesses and deaths in Walkerton in 2000 were not only due to the incompetence of the system operators but also to the **Ontario government's deregulation of water quality testing and cuts to inspection services while not enforcing the guidelines that had been in place.** History must NOT repeat itself.

**ERO 019-6853** We assume is being proposed to accommodate the colossal dewatering which would be required for a **publicly funded** underground parking garage for the preposterous Ontario Place **private** spa. We foresee trouble ahead with soil and building instability. If local conservation authorities will no longer be notified of water taking, problems can be expected, especially in vulnerable headwaters areas where dewatering has been known to go on 24/7 for years because of underground streams.

**ERO 019-6928** We do not feel confident that self-regulation will prevent future hazards such as the industrial dumping of mercury into the Wabigoon River, thereby poisoning the aquatic ecosystem that the Grassy Narrows and White Dog First Nations depend on for sustenance and livelihood. This issue has remained unresolved for 50 years. There is potential for even more serious consequences with slacking off of regulations and reducing stringent government vigilance and monitoring.



**ERO 019-6963** As YREA sees it, the self-regulation under the Environmental Activity and Sector Registry will allow the government to continue to divest itself of responsibility should another Lac-Mégantic tragedy occur. The Environment Ministry's work with industries that spill hazardous substances is too weak to prevent and reduce the risks from spills. Information about these spills and potential impacts on nearby people, communities and the environment are not publicly disclosed in a transparent or timely way. The lack of cost-recovery for spill responses cost taxpayers, **not polluters** millions of dollars.

By implementing these changes, removing EROs so Ontarians are kept in the dark with no public participation, scrutiny and legal recourse will only exacerbate the risks of pollution, impacts to human health and environmental degradation. Instead of handing off responsibility, the government should not evade its duty and strengthen regulations. York Region Environmental Alliance therefore requests that all four EROs be withdrawn as the need to address reparations when accidents or damages occur will not save anyone any time or money.

## ONTARIO ERO 019-6813 PROPOSED SPRAWL POLICIES

York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA) strongly opposes amendments to the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan). These changes would further exacerbate urban sprawl and the ongoing loss of farmland and natural areas in Ontario. The continued onslaught to long standing conservation safeguards must stop. For years, YREA has advocated against sprawl and the unnecessary Hwy 413 in favour of protecting farmland. Our exact words included **‘what will happen when climate change & drought reduce agricultural capacity in the USA?’** WELL THAT TIME HAS COME as US fruit giants [Driscoll & Naturipe](#) look north to Canada to establish berry farms in Quebec & Ontario. In place of these sprawl amendments, Ontario should be making provisions to accommodate the continued waves of farming migrants by protecting and **expanding** farmland so we can ensure greater agricultural capability and local food security in the emerging climate crisis which will impact agriculture and food supply worldwide.

Sprawl development will not solve current housing needs, as this government pretends. A shortage of land is not the cause of Ontario’s housing scarcity, it is [inefficient](#) land use which can be resolved in existing areas through intensification. The amount of land already designated for development far exceeds what is needed to meet long-range housing targets. The Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt must be protected by retaining all PPS and Growth Plan policies. YREA strongly opposes proposed policy changes that would:

- Eliminate mandatory intensification and allow municipalities to expand settlement areas at any time without a full review of infrastructure needs or potential impacts on farmland and natural areas;
- Force municipalities to allow severances from every farm, even in prime agricultural areas;
- Exempt lands that are the subject of Minister’s Zoning Orders (MZOs) from complying with provincial policies and official plans;
- Remove the requirement for municipalities to undertake watershed planning and protection;
- Weaken and eliminate policies intended to address climate change.

These proposed policies will spell disaster for the lands and waters that sustain Ontarians. We urge you to do what is right. Withdraw ERO 019-6813 and retain all PPS and Growth Plan policies that are designed to curb sprawl and protect farmland and natural areas. The politicians, cronies and influencers who have no qualms about eliminating the plans that protect our environment will soon be gone while the damage caused by their self-interests and foolhardy decisions will last forever.



BEFORE

AFTER

SPRAWL DEVELOPMENT ON MUCH NEEDED FARMLAND ON THE  
OAK RIDGES MORAINE/GREENBELT

## PICKERING COUNCIL SUPPORT MOTION 12.1 IN OPPOSITION TO A PICKERING AIRPORT

York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA) strongly and unequivocally supports this motion. The research has been done by an arm's length group showing clearly that an airport is not needed. Any insistence by anyone that such a project is still viable smacks of questionable motives similar to what is going on at the Provincial level with Greenbelt cronyism and which is being presently reviewed by the OPP under the Anti Rackets branch. YREA has been advocating for the preservation of [local agriculture](#) for years including in our letter to Pickering Council in June, 2021 which follows. Climate change and drought are already impacting agricultural capacity in the USA with fruit berry giants [Driscoll/Naturipe](#) looking north to establish berry farms in Ontario and Quebec. We need to preserve more farmland to ensure a local, secure food supply and to be prepared to accommodate waves of agricultural migrants from the USA in the future. In this way some of the high food costs of distance transport and greater GHGE would be substantially reduced. Connecting these lands to the Rouge Urban Park would reverse biodiversity loss, protect rare plants and animals and increase habitat protection, especially with the establishment of organic practices which would be a boon to our pesticide decimated pollinators.

It is heartening to see such enlightened leadership emerging in Pickering and YREA fully supports motion 12.1. We are living in a different era now and high frequency rail's time has come. Time also for Pickering and the Federal government to put their words regarding climate change commitments into actions by declaring this area in Pickering as an organic agricultural preserve in perpetuity.

## GEORGINA COUNCIL PHOSPHORUS REDUCTION ISSUES

Phosphorus removal is one small, although costly, measure needed to control contaminants leaching into Lake Simcoe. A number of local measures could also be implemented to reduce so many more pollutants:

- If septic tanks were pumped every 2 years instead of 3-5 years this would reduce impurities, including [E coli leaching into groundwater](#) and onto beaches on Lake Simcoe.
- If farming on the Holland Marsh transitioned to [regenerative organic](#) then excess nitrogen would not reach waterways through runoff. Nitrogen overstimulates the growth of algae, leaving dead-zones in ecosystems that can't keep up with the accelerated growth. LSRCAs has identified 28 pesticides in the Lake Simcoe watershed. Many have been banned but are still present due to their persistence. Transitioning away from conventional farming to a more sustainable system would not only benefit Lake Simcoe but also people, pollinators and aquatic systems that are adversely impacted by these toxins.
- In YREA's [2021 spring e-news](#) we advocated for biological control of Phragmites instead of spraying glyphosate to eradicate, which has been the method throughout York Region and Lake Simcoe along with its pervasive use in conventional farming. An important study - [The overlooked impact of rising glyphosate use on phosphorus loading in agricultural watersheds](#) clearly states that the use of **glyphosate adds phosphorus (P)**, to agricultural landscapes, influencing accumulation and cycling of phosphorus in soil and nearby surface waters.



YREA's point in all this is that yes, phosphorus is a problem but it is not just about phosphorus. A more holistic approach, with greater understanding on numerous fronts needs to be taken to ensure a healthy Lake Simcoe and its ecosystem. The \$24 million earmarked for phosphorus removal would better serve the public good by instead supporting farmers to transition to regenerative organic agriculture. Along with stopping the use of glyphosate to control Phragmites, phosphorus loading could eventually be eliminated. We need to adopt better all over practices, otherwise the problem will persist and never be resolved.

## SRPI.23.050 ZONING AMENDMENT 1200 & 1380 STOUFFVILLE RD. RICHMOND HILL



York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA) opposes the rezoning request on the subject lands. Rezoning to accommodate this massive development is completely inappropriate and premature at this time given that the Federal government, through the Impact Assessment Agency, Parks Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada will be undertaking a Rouge National Park study. The tremendous size and scope of the proposed development will have

a huge impact on the highly sensitive Rouge Watershed, Rouge River Headwater Wetland Complex, its species at risk, woodlots, wetland & tributaries with their vital linkages to the Federal Rouge Urban Park.

All the hard surfaces that come with such development will instigate flooding, the detrimental effect of road salt, increased surface runoff, more water pollution, increased erosion and sedimentation, channel instability and loss of biodiversity in the Rouge River Watershed. Sewers and other related infrastructure would compromise the networks of underground streams and watercourses.

YREA has previously also opposed rezoning on the [Doner property](#), on [Leslie north](#) of Stouffville Road as an LPAT participant, and [condo development](#) on Bayview adjacent Wilcox, Lake St. George wetlands. Even as the province is circumventing ecological protections in favour of unbridled sprawl, YREA strongly feels that Richmond Hill cannot disregard the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Greenbelt Plan if we want to avoid irreversible environment degradation which would permanently impact our ecosystems.

### YREA SIGNED ON TO THE FOLLOWING JOINT SUBMISSIONS:

#### ERO 019-6813 READ FULL SUBMISSION FROM 452 ALO MEMBERS [HERE](#)

Alliance for a Liveable Ontario members response to government proposal to gut two of Ontario's planning tools – the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Provincial Policy Statement under the Planning Act.

#### ERO 019-7378 BLACK ASH REGULATION OPPOSITION

Ontario Nature & 41 other NGOs signed on, Black Ash: A lesson on how not to implement Ontario's Endangered Species Act. [Read more here](#)



#### ALLIANCE FOR A LIVABLE ONTARIO GROUP SUBMISSION

requesting an expanded investigation by the Integrity Commissioner and a new investigation by the Auditor General of the provincial government's land use planning decisions given that The Auditor General's *Special Report on Changes to the Greenbelt* revealed that a number of disturbing and indefensible processes were followed by the Minister's Office at the Ministry of MMAH with respect to the removal of land from Greenbelt protection in November 2022. [Read full letter here.](#)

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVANCING PROTECTED & CONSERVED AREAS OF ONTARIO

Letter supported by 124 groups can be [read here](#)

### YREA IS A MEMBER AND/OR SUPPORTER OF THESE GROUPS

|   |                              |                            |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Alliance for a Liveable Ontario                 | Friends of the Earth Canada  |                            |
| CBAN – Canadian Biotechnology<br>Action Network | Land Over Landings           | Ontario Nature             |
| Canadian Organic Growers                        | Ontario Clean Air Alliance   | Organic Growers of Ontario |
| Food and Water First                            | Ontario Greenbelt Alliance   | Safe Food Matter           |
|   | Ontario Headwaters Institute | Stop the Spray ON/Canada   |



## A SNAPSHOT OF YREA'S 2023 E-NEWS

YREA continues to connect with many hundreds of people digitally via our quarterly newsletters. This platform enables us to provide subscribers with information on our advocacy work. We promote an understanding of sustainability issues through education to help us think of our choices in terms of their impact on human and environmental health, our natural resources and our planet.

[WINTER 2023](#) discussed ecological economics as a way forward given that the trickled down economy hasn't work; BILL 23 more homes, more sprawl; questioned the age old

practice of fireworks with its toxic chemical emissions, suggesting costs could be put to better use elsewhere; an update to CEPA; the pesticide focused pasta wars; the joys of winter birding as well as winter reading suggestions.

[SPRING 2023](#) described what qualifies as organic maple syrup; what to do to establish a pollinator patch & advocated for no mow may; explained the benefits of community supported agriculture; provided info on new law in France for solar carports; the down side of fragrances – the new second hand smoke.

[SUMMER 2023](#) wildlife friendly garden tips; growing up & eating organic in schools; what we all can do to help our planet to MAKE EVERY MONTH EARTH MONTH; the human health hazards of artificial turf; links to our provincial parks across Canada for summer camping.



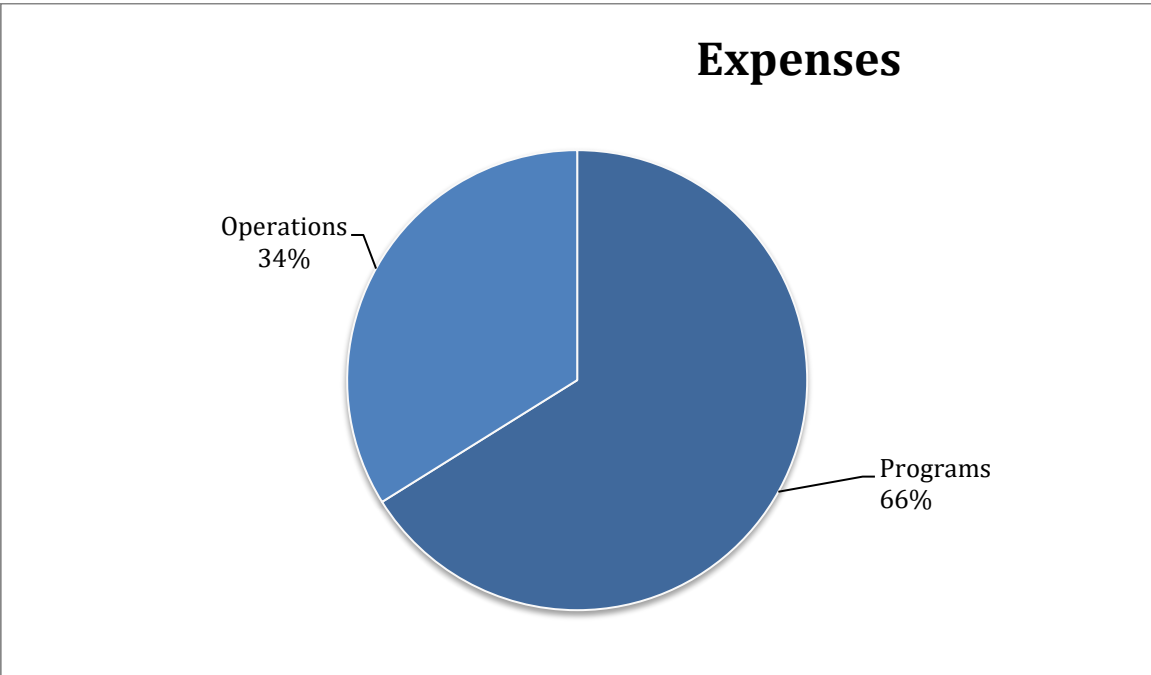
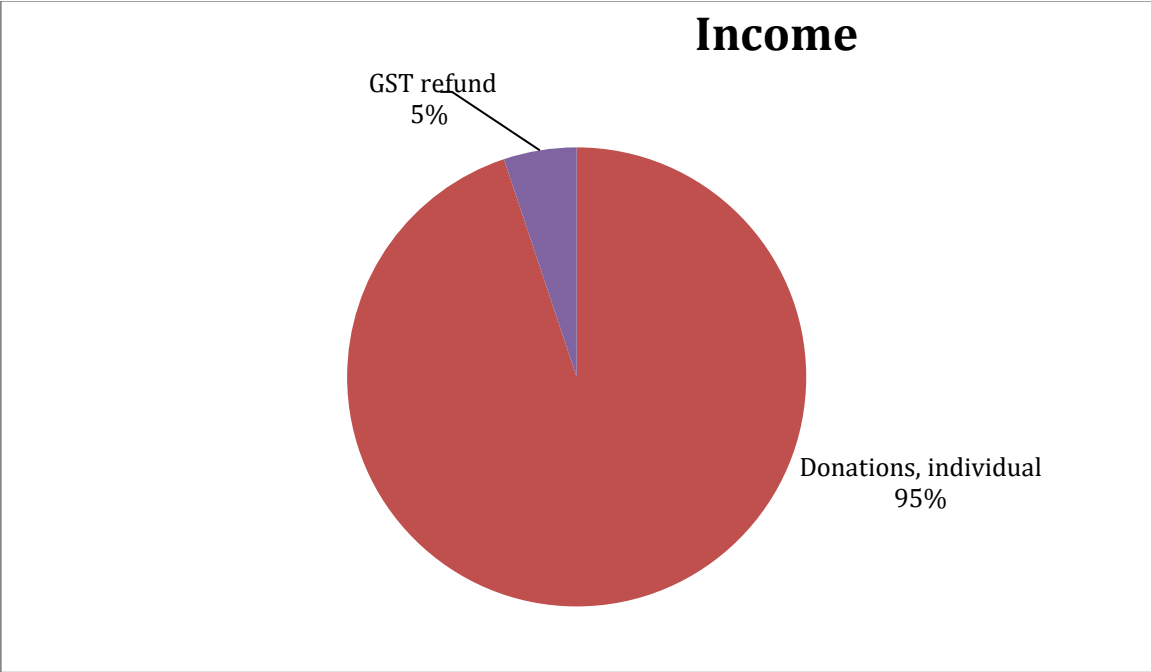
[AUTUMN 2023](#) published two wonderful poems from the Letters to the Earth: Between despair & hope art exhibition; provided some eye-opening info on the lengths companies have gone to with greenwashing marketing; outlined the workplace hazards of stone & concrete dust which also affects our environment & called for stronger legislation; reminder to leave the leaves for the benefits of nature; the benefits of forest bathing & hiking.

[SOLSTICE 2023](#) asked that we try to find a bright spot in our lives which can help in these troubled times; suggested a great way to remove carbon from the air by gifting a tree to be planted in spring. YREA provided links in our e-news to our government submissions so subscribers, members and donors are able to access our responses to matters of concern. In each issue we highlighted an outdoor or nature activity.



YORK REGION ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE

2023 FINANCIAL YEAR END





**A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO ALL DONORS AND ESPECIALLY TO THOSE  
WHO HAVE SUSTAINED YREA WITH ANNUAL DONATIONS  
WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO EVERYONE**

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Marilyn Isaac Stewart



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Abdullah Abbas

Sharon & Jim Bradley

e3Toronto

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Andrew McCammon

Munazzah Shirwani

Tom & Kate Taylor

YREA does not utilize costly and unsustainable paper mailings  
or separate email solicitation requests for donations,  
which makes us doubly appreciative for the kindness of our donors

Special thanks to YREA's volunteer board members & to Mark Hubbard  
for his volunteer time to remedy our website issues.

## LOOKING BACK AT 2023 & AHEAD TO 2024 FOR YREA

2023 was another unspeakable year with so much loss & suffering in the world by way of climate change, war, greed & a reprehensible disregard for human rights & the environment. Many of us are still fighting the pesticide industry which has so much influence over governments that their toxins are allowed to poison people, water, food & nature. But we do have something to be thankful for – the halt to the ravaging of the Greenbelt by the unscrupulous. Created to protect agricultural lands, natural areas & watersheds, the Greenbelt provides us with food, habitat for wildlife & absorbs surplus rainwater, preventing flooding as long as it is not paved over by sprawl development. Now we need to implement irrevocable bylaws to ensure protections in perpetuity.

YREA participated in 3 community events – Vaughan Earth Hour, Richmond Hill Climate Readiness Spring Fair and a Richmond Hill fall garden event where we engaged many people with our pollinator awareness, the benefits of organic food & ecological responsibility information.

### YREA's 2024 ADVOCACY FOCUS:

Some issues take a long time to be resolved or implemented, so we will continue our activism and keep at it.

- Organic food in schools advocacy
- Greenbelt & farmland protection
- Ban on glyphosate use in Canada
- Solar covered parking lots
- Pollinator habitat & rewilding
- Provide our workshops upon request



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