

MPP Arnott urges government to establish Ontario Green Legacy

The Ontario Government needs to publicly commit to establishing an Ontario Green Legacy programme in 2017.

That was the message that Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott took to the floor of the Ontario Legislature on May 5.

Last fall this House unanimously passed our resolution calling on the Government to establish an Ontario Green Legacy Programme, Arnott reminded MPPs. This programme, based on the County of Wellington's Green Legacy Programme, would seek to plant 150 million trees, starting in 2017 to mark the 150th anniversary of Ontario within Confederation.

Arnott called on the Government to respect the will of the Ontario Legislature and commit to action.

It has now been more than six months since my resolution was passed and 2017 is rapidly approaching, Arnott said. We need the Government to make a public commitment to implement our Ontario Green Legacy programme proposal.

If Private Member's Business is to be meaningful, the Government needs to listen to the will of this House, not ignore it, he added.

While Arnott acknowledged that 150 million trees is an ambitious goal, he believes that it can be achieved.

In order to reach the goal of 150 million trees, the Province would have to plant approximately 11 trees for each Ontarian. By comparison, the County of Wellington has already planted approximately 21 trees for each person living in the County.

In addition, he noted that from 1970 until around 1995, Ontarians planted about 25 million trees per year on private land.

Arnott also believes that an Ontario Green Legacy programme would be consistent with any provincial strategy to combat climate change.

We know the Government has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and they say they want to combat climate change. Again, I would suggest that an Ontario Green Legacy programme could and should be a part of this strategy, he told the Legislature.

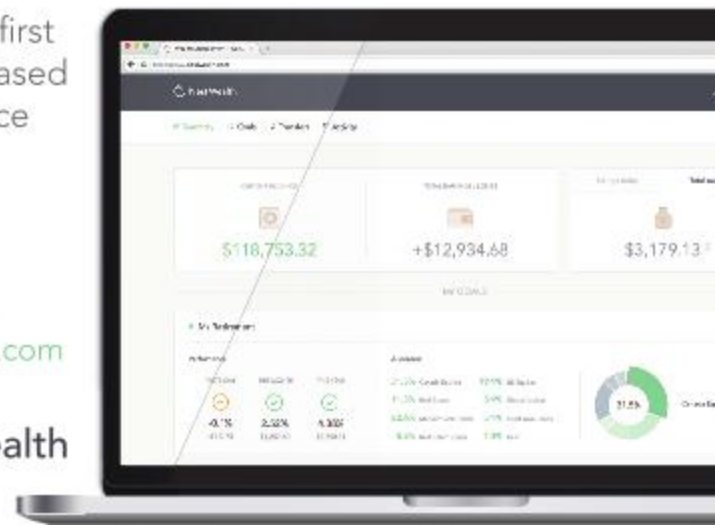
Not only does the idea have the support of the Ontario Legislature, the County of Wellington, the Town of Halton Hills, the David Suzuki Foundation, NeighbourWoods on the Grand, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, Citizens Climate Lobby Canada, and the Professional Foresters Association have all expressed support for an Ontario Green Legacy Programme. Numerous other groups and individuals have also expressed interest.

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*Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, The High Cost of Canada's Mutual Fund Based Retirement System, March, 2011



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