

Halton supports the permanent protection of Greenbelt: survey

A recent survey shows 94 per cent of Halton respondents want to see Ontario's Greenbelt protected.

The online poll, conducted by Environics for Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation between Aug. 19 and Sept. 8, asked 2,008 Ontarians (including 285 Halton residents) questions related to the Greenbelt, which contains more than 800,000 hectares of protected green space, farmland, forests, wetlands, and watersheds in areas that include the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine while providing habitat for more than one-third of Ontario's species at risk.

Of those surveyed, nine out of 10 respondents believe it's important to grow the Greenbelt to safeguard against urban sprawl.

Additionally, four out of five respondents in Halton express that the boundaries of the Greenbelt should be preserved forever.

The polling results, released earlier this month, come on the heels of recommendations the Ontario government received from an expert advisory panel led by former federal cabinet minister and former Toronto mayor David Crombie.

The panel was tasked to review the Greenbelt Plan and three other land-use

plans in southern Ontario.

"While the Province carries out its legislated 10-year review of the Greenbelt Plan, it's clear the vast majority of residents in Halton cherish the nearly two million acres of permanently protected farmland, greenspace, and natural heritage systems," said Burkhard Mausberg, CEO of Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation.

"A number of municipalities want to pave over the province's treasured Greenbelt, but this recent public polling reveals that Ontarians are just not on board," said Mausberg.

Meanwhile, Municipal Leaders for the Greenbelt (MLGB) this week issued a statement saying they applaud recommendations made by Crombie and the panel regarding Ontario's greenbelt and growth plans as a positive steps.

MLGB co-chairs Oakville Mayor Rob Burton, Ajax Mayor Steve Parish and Toronto Deputy Mayor Glenn De Baeremaeker noted in the statement, that given Ontario's recent climate commitments made in Paris at the United Nation climate change conference (COP21), the Greenbelt and growth plans are the Province's best tools for progress on climate change.

MLGB reaffirmed its position, calling on

the government to expand Ontario's Greenbelt to protect an additional one million acres of environmentally-sensitive features and natural heritage systems. It also wants the government to further protect prime agricultural lands and agricultural economies in the whitebelt by creating a special food-

belt designation designed for permanent protection of agriculture as well as enable municipal greenbelt expansions by reducing municipal red tape simplifying the process.

For more information on the Greenbelt, visit greenbelt.ca. For more on MLBG, visit www.greenbeltleaders.ca.





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