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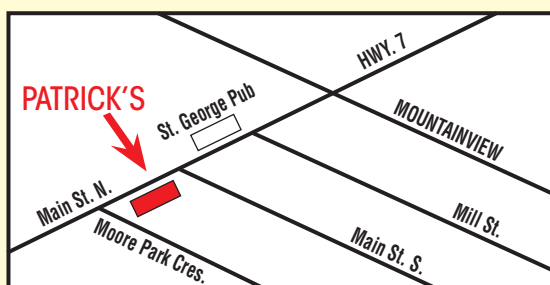
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OPINION

PROPOSED CN HUB DOESN'T BELONG HERE

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FINDINGS PROVE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD REJECT THIS PROJECT, WRITES MICHAEL CHONG



MICHAEL CHONG
Column

Last month, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada released its environmental assessment of the proposed CN Logistics Hub in Milton. The Agency is a federal body responsible for conducting environmental assessments on major projects.

The proposed Hub would be a truck-rail facility covering 1,000 acres of land CN owns in Milton, transferring shipping containers between railcars and trucks. When fully operational, it would handle approximately 450,000 containers per year, primarily transporting finished products such as appliances, furniture, and household goods.

However, about three per cent of the containers would contain dangerous goods. The Hub would be serviced by four trains a day, two of which are already moving along the Halton Subdivision mainline through the Town of Milton. Some 800 trucks per day would enter and exit the terminal.

The environmental assessment of the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada concluded that the Hub "is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects on air quality and on human health as it relates to air quality, and significant adverse cumulative environment effects on air quality, human health, wildlife habitat, and the availability of agricultural land."

The Region of Halton has concluded this project will negatively impact the communities of Milton, Burlington, Oakville, and

Halton Hills. On February 12, Halton Regional Council endorsed a resolution calling on the federal government to refuse CN's application for a Hub in Milton.

I've heard from numerous constituents who told me they are against this project because of the impact on human health, the environment and traffic congestion.

I'm opposed the Hub for all the reasons outlined above. In addition, both Hong Kong and Rotterdam — much larger cargo container facilities than CN's existing facilities in GTA — demonstrate that it's possible to increase volumes on CN's existing footprint rather than paving over more farmland and green space.

I've raised concerns on the proposed Hub twice in the House of Commons — the second time directly with the prime minister.

It's now up to the Liberal government to decide whether to approve or deny this project. My hope is they will listen to the experts, as well as the council and people of Halton. The Liberals' decision will demonstrate whether they are serious about standing up for the environment.

Michael Chong is the MP for Wellington-Halton Hills.

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