

Hwy. 407 extension delayed

The Federal Fisheries Department released a long-awaited screening of Hwy. 407's eastern extension yesterday, but didn't clear construction to proceed.

Instead, the department ordered a 30-day comment period on the screening before deciding what to do.

The comment period ends March 10 at midnight, Edwin Debruyn, senior policy adviser for the department, said yesterday.

"The decision on whether the project can proceed or not has not been made," he said from Burlington.

Debruyn said it's the department's job to determine the significance of the environmental effects of the road — which travels over the Rouge River

and other tributaries — and whether the effects can be mitigated.

After comments are collected and analysed, it could move to either approve the 16-kilometre extension from Markham to Pickering, reject it, or send it to a mediator or a full panel review.

The extension was previously given environmental approval without a hearing by the provincial government, which sold the highway to private interests last May.

"This is just the worst bloody news," a disappointed Markham Mayor Don Cousens said. "Is it any wonder Canada isn't moving ahead when you've got levels of government working at opposite ends?"

— Mike Adler

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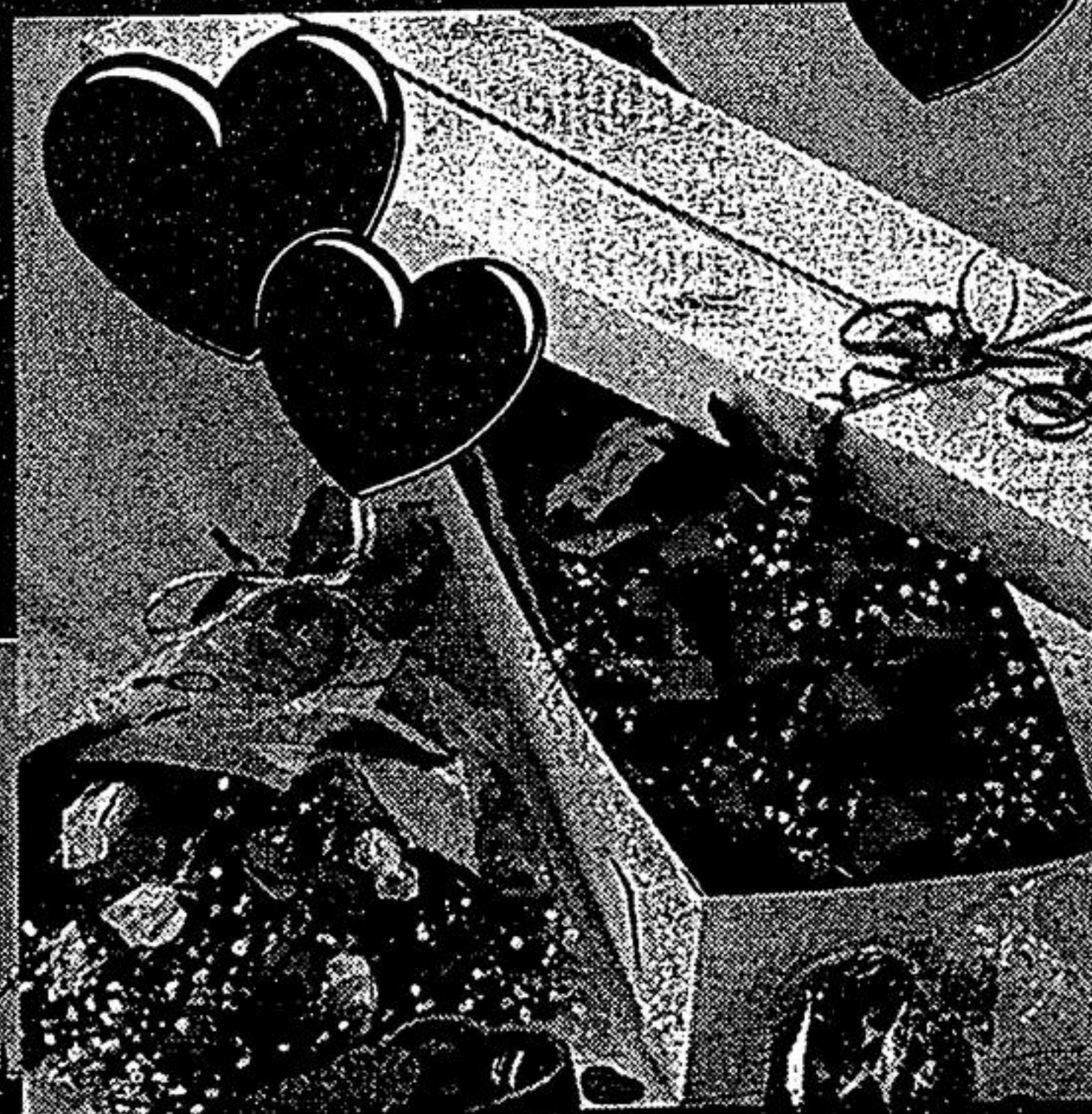
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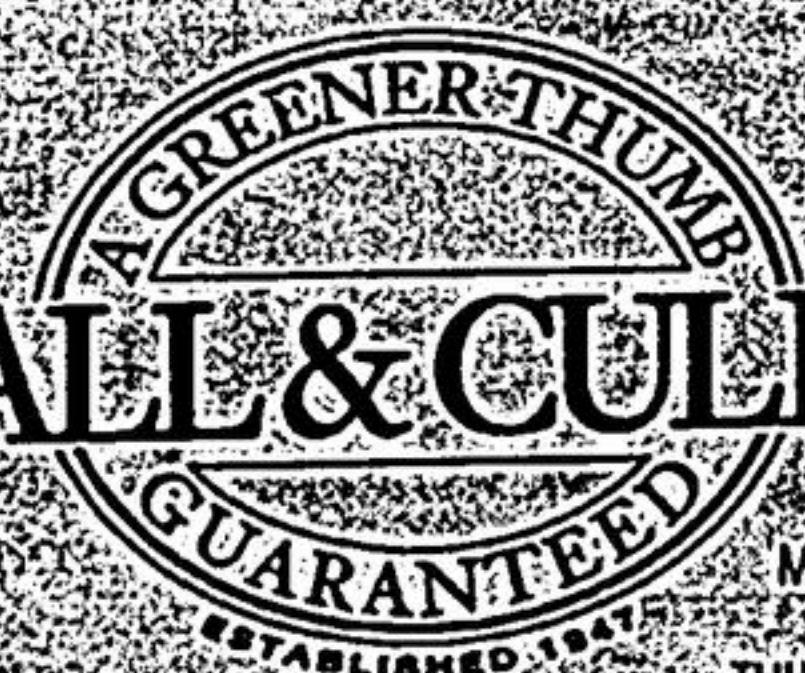


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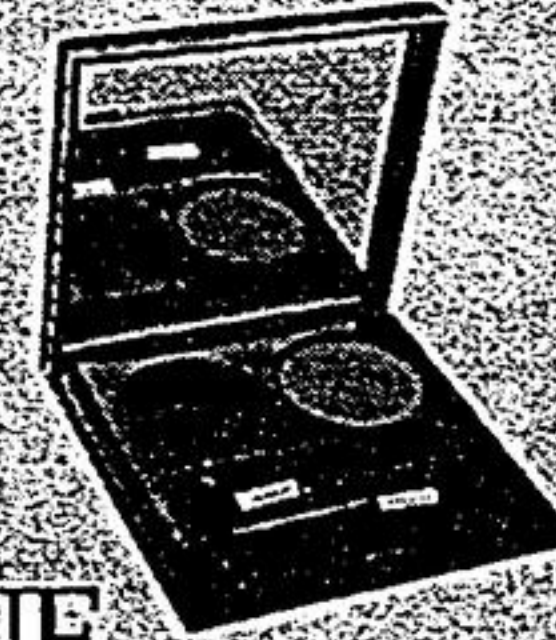
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