

# Website upsets greenbelt alliance

A new advocacy group called the Greenbelt Coalition is bankrolled by developers with land in the province's proposed greenbelt.

The coalition says it "strongly supports the principles of the greenbelt" but the launch of its website, [www.greenbeltcoalition.org](http://www.greenbeltcoalition.org), last week angered the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance, backed by dozens of environmental and health groups.

"It's like the urban sprawl coalition," Rick Smith, executive director of Environmental Defence and an Alliance spokesperson, complained Friday. "It's all the guys with a vested interest in things remaining the same."

The new greenbelt group's name is so similar it promotes confusion between the two, Mr. Smith suggested, recalling when Toronto debated a bylaw to ban pesticides, a lawncare industry-funded group called the Toronto Environmental Coalition formed to oppose the ban. The primary ban supporter was the Toronto Environmental Alliance.

The Greenbelt Coalition's executive

director, however, says the group's name is not intended to confuse.

"People can make a choice," added Ralph Capocci, who is a former government affairs chairperson for the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce.

*Can a developer-financed coalition credibly say it will fight to include Boyd Park in the greenbelt?*

The Coalition, which lists prominent planning consultants and a development lawyer on its advisory board, "started off with a group of affected landowners" but expanded to include farming interests and academics, Mr. Capocci said.

The group sees "very little substance" behind the proposed greenbelt legislation and will seek ways for landowners to appeal the plan, passage of which members want delayed until a provincial growth plan is in

place, he said.

But Mr. Capocci insisted his group doesn't oppose a greenbelt and wants to know why some areas, such as Boyd Park in Vaughan, aren't included.

The City of Vaughan favours extending Pine Valley Drive across the park to ease traffic congestion and serve developments in Woodbridge. Can a developer-financed coalition credibly say it will fight to include Boyd Park in the greenbelt?

"Why not?" Mr. Capocci replied.

—Mike Adler

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  - St. John Bosco - Feb. 19 (199 Belview Ave., Woodbridge)
  - St. Charles Garnier - Feb. 26 (16 Castle Rock Dr., Richmond Hill)
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