



Ontario Farmland Trust
c/o University of Guelph
50 Stone Rd E
Guelph ON N1G 2W1

November 8, 2023

Pickering City Council
One The Esplanade
Pickering ON, L1V 6K7

Durham Region Council
605 Rossland Road East
Whitby ON, L1N 6A3

Dear Pickering City Council and Durham Region Council,


Subject: Response to Proposed Act regarding the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing today on behalf of OFT, concerning the proposed legislation for the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve (DRAP), with an invitation to support the further protection of these important farmlands.

On December 13, 2022, I wrote to Pickering City Council applauding the stance taken to reject Bill 39, which includes the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act and expressing interest in collaboration to uphold the integrity of these easements. We are pleased to hear of the Ontario government's initiative to introduce legislation that will reverse their decision and continue the protections of the DRAP easements and covenants. OFT fully supports this effort and applauds the government's commitment to preserving these vital landscapes for agricultural uses. The government is now proposing a new act regarding the DRAP easements. Public consultation for this new act is open until November 30, 2023 on the Environmental Registry of Ontario website under [ERO # 019-7735](#).

Easements have been a cornerstone of our work at OFT. We routinely employ them as a tool to forge new partnerships with private landowners and to safeguard significant farmlands and landscapes for the long term. The integrity of these tools is paramount to our mission and the broader goal of conserving Ontario's valuable agricultural and natural landscapes. We believe that OFT plays a significant role in sustaining the easements on these lands so there is no longer the consistent back-and-forth protections and uncertainty the agricultural community experiences regarding agricultural lands.

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 Corporate Services Department Legislative Services Division	
Date & Time Received:	November 14, 2023 9:42 am
Original To:	CIP
Copies To:	
Take Appropriate Action	<input type="checkbox"/> File <input type="checkbox"/>
Notes/Comments:	



Proposal for Upholding DRAP Easement Integrity

As part of the ongoing commitment to safeguard the DRAP lands and uphold the integrity of the subject farmland conservation easements, OFT is proposing that our organization be instated as the holder of the DRAP conservation easement agreements. With nearly two decades of experience in farmland conservation easement agreements and as Ontario's only land trust with a deep-rooted mission to protect and preserve our farmland, OFT is uniquely positioned to ensure the long-term protection and monitoring of these agreements. By deepening our collaboration, governments and OFT can jointly advance our shared objectives. Such a partnership would have positive results in response to issues that the public cares deeply about.

We would like to ask for Pickering City Council and Durham Region Council's support for OFT's proposal and renew our call to discuss how we can collectively uphold the integrity of these easements. Last week, we also wrote to Minister Smith in regards to ERO 019-7735, New Act regarding the DRAP easements, outlining this proposal and requesting a meeting to discuss further.

We believe that with collaborative efforts, we can ensure the protection of our province's cherished agricultural landscapes for generations to come. We welcome an opportunity to explore this further with you.

Sincerely,

Martin Straathof
Executive Director
Ontario Farmland Trust

Margaret Walton
Chair, Board of Directors
Ontario Farmland Trust