May 5, 2017

To: Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources

Re: Please Add Section 6(3) to Bill C-18 and the Rouge National Urban (NU) Park Act

Dear Senators,

Bill C-18 contains positive amendments to prioritize ecological integrity within the Rouge NU Park Act and allow continued farming leases on some publicly owned parklands. However, Bill C-18 has a serious omission which should be remedied by adding amendment 6(3):

6(3) Subsection (1) is intended to support and complement the implementation of pre-existing Ontario Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine, Rouge Park and Watershed Conservations Plans.

Amendment 6(3) is necessary to honour the:

A) Canada & Ontario Agreement to "meet or exceed" pre-existing Ontario Plans;
B) Ontario’s request for an explicit amendment like 6(3);
C) Liberal "party approved" commitments of 16 GTA candidates elected as MPs.

If amendment 6(3) is omitted from the Rouge NU Park Act, the Federal government will waste precious public time, money and resources on "reinventing" pre-existing Ontario Plans while urgent remedial actions are delayed by unnecessary duplication. Amendment 6(3) is necessary to ensure the timely implementation of pre-existing Plans to:

1) improve watershed, Lake Ontario and drinking water quality and public health;
2) mitigate growing pollution, flooding and erosion liabilities and climate change risks;
3) improve habitat, biodiversity and the recovery of species at risk;
4) improve public access to public park lands in Canada’s most populous region;
5) recreate a historic First Nations "Carrying Place Trail" and Ontario Greenbelt Plan "main ecological corridor" between Lake Ontario and the Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM).

Alvin Curling (Scarborough MPP 1985-2005) notes:

"Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe relies on the implementation of Greenbelt, Rouge Park and Watershed Plans to buffer the impacts of growth and climate change, and better protect Lake Ontario’s health, and human health and wellbeing."

Ontario is transferring thousands of acres of existing provincial Rouge Park lands to the Federal Government, worth an estimated several hundred million dollars. Ontario’s pre-existing Conservation Plans represent significant public investments and interests which warrant explicit support and impetus within Rouge NU Park Act amendment 6(3).
Due to highly subsidized residential and agricultural leases, most of the public lands in Rouge Park are not accessible to the public. The subsidized lease holders include government employees and family members, semi-retired millionaires and some farmers with historical roots. If this taxpayer subsidized status quo is hastily frozen within 30 year leases, Canadians will be excluded from most of the public lands in this national park and Canadians will lose:

- **$3+ Billion** worth of ecological services such as mitigation of pollution and flooding;
- **$100+ Million** due to lease subsidies and the absence of open and competitive bidding.

Since 1990, the Ontario Rouge Park of 40 square kilometres (km²) has grown into a National Rouge Park Plan of some 79 km², with great potential to grow to 100+ km². Rouge Park now averages 3 km wide, stretching 25 km north from the beaches, bluffs and Waterfront Trail of Lake Ontario to the forests and trails of the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Trans Canada Trail.

Just imagine what can be accomplished over the next 30 years by following through with democratically approved and science-based Ontario Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine, Rouge Park and Watershed Conservation Plans. Just imagine the re-creation of the First Nations Carrying Place Trail and Greenbelt "main ecological corridor" between Lake Ontario and the ORM within Rouge NU Park. Just imagine what can be accomplished over the next 100 years by giving priority to Ecological Integrity and implementing science-based Parks Canada Management Plans for Rouge NU Park.

Within our nation, and around the world, Canada's National Parks are famous for their natural beauty and ecological integrity. The Federal Government, Parks Canada and the people of Canada have a lot at stake in the creation and restoration of Rouge NU Park.

We trust that you will demonstrate vision and protect the long term environmental interests of all Canadians by supporting Bill C-18 and adding amendment 6(3).

Canadians want Rouge NU Park to be an example of ecosystem, watershed and cultural healing and a source of environmental inspiration and optimism for our country, for our planet, and particularly for our youth.

Sincerely,

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