



February 16, 2021

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Mayor Alar Soever, The Blue Mountains [mayor@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:mayor@thebluemountains.ca)

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We hope you and your loved ones are well. Thank you for all your efforts over the past months to help get us through this terrible COVID-19 crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how important natural spaces are to our wellbeing. We rely on these areas for our mental and physical health, and on farmland for the local food that keeps us healthy and our farmers employed. These lands are also critical to conserving biodiversity and enhancing community resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Some local governments in the GTA have ignored this reality and have tried to get permission to have protected Greenbelt land used for sprawl-style development. As well, some are working to secure Minister's Zoning Orders to bypass important environmental protections and local planning rules. Others, however, have expressed growing concerns about the provincial government's inappropriate use of this tool and we hope this number grows.

In addition, just recently, the Province has passed regressive changes to the Conservation Authorities Act to remove powers to protect natural areas and to protect us from the impacts of floods and toxic soil dumping.

As a result we are making two specific requests:

Please resist the use of MZOs and tell the Province you oppose the recent changes to the Conservation Authorities Act because both of these actions fast-track sprawl-style development, sidestep public consultation and override policies intended to protect Ontario's natural areas, water sources and farmland. Please also consider asking the province to add farmland and natural areas in your region to the Greenbelt to increase their protection.

Please pass a Council resolution that includes the above points and forward it to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

As an environmental advocacy group established for over 25 years, we are calling on you and the entire Council to commit to resisting the misuse of MZOs, oppose implementation of the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act, stop sprawl and seek growth of the Greenbelt as part of a Green and Just

Recovery.

Yours sincerely,

Norman Wingrove, Acting President BMWTF

C: BMWTF Board of Directors

BMWTF Watershed Action Committee

MZO Letter to Municipalities 2021-02-09