



# SMART GROWTH

## Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

March 7, 2018

### RE: Growing the Greenbelt in the Outer Ring

Dear Minister Mauro,

We at Smart Growth Waterloo Region are delighted that Waterloo Region has been included in the proposed study area for your government's proposed expansion of the Greenbelt in the Outer Ring of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. **Smart Growth Waterloo Region stands strongly in support of expansion of the Greenbelt in Waterloo Region**, for three key reasons.

First, Greenbelt protection would add a crucial second layer of protection to the Region of Waterloo's strong existing protections. Since Waterloo Region was left out of the initial Greenbelt boundaries, the Region of Waterloo worked hard for many years to create and defend strong local landscape-level protections for agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas. This is particularly exemplified by the Region's Protected Countryside designation to the west and south of our main urban complexes. While there is a great deal of support across Waterloo Region for the Protected Countryside, the second layer of protection afforded by the provincial Greenbelt would help ensure that those policies are permanent and remain in place for future generations.

Second, Greenbelt protection would connect Waterloo Region's protected areas to features in neighbouring municipalities that do not currently have comparable protections. Crucial landscapes do not end at municipal boundaries, and the policies that protect these features must not end at municipal boundaries, either. We are pleased to see the Waterloo and Paris/Galt Moraine complex in Waterloo Region, Brant County, and Wellington County included in the study area so that this complex can be fully protected from urban sprawl across different municipal jurisdictions.

Third, Waterloo Region's water resources must receive the highest levels of protection from the province. Waterloo Region is the largest community in Canada to rely almost exclusively on groundwater. The provision of adequate and high quality water has been a concern in the Waterloo area for decades. While significant water conservation has allowed us to serve our growing population with groundwater, our reliance means that groundwater in the region is especially in need of protection.

For these reasons, the Greenbelt must be expanded to Waterloo Region. **However, it is crucial that no existing protections be lost as a result of Greenbelt expansion in Waterloo Region.**

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We agree with the Region of Waterloo's insistence that the highest level of protection must prevail. None of our rural areas should be left more vulnerable as a result of Greenbelt expansion.

We were encouraged by your recent letter to Regional Chair Ken Seiling regarding these issues, which was shared with councillors at a recent meeting. **We applaud your willingness to work with the Region to ensure that Greenbelt protections are achieved in our area without threatening our hard-won protections, and your willingness to make changes to the Greenbelt Plan if it is necessary to achieve these common goals.**

This is a crucial time for the future of agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas in Waterloo Region and across the Outer Ring, and it is past time to expand the Greenbelt. We thank you for your work to date and this opportunity to submit comments, and we look forward to the next steps in this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Mike Boos, Kate Daley, and Kevin Thomason

Co-Founders, Smart Growth Waterloo Region

[www.smartgrowthwaterloo.ca](http://www.smartgrowthwaterloo.ca)

