



Attention: Regional Chair and Members of Regional Council

Dear Regional Chair and Members of Regional Council:

RE: OPA No. 744 – Buffering between housing and farming

We are writing today to the York Regional Chair and Councilors as they consider the matter of buffering active farmland in the City of Vaughan (and the Region in general) from urban development and as they weigh the need to balance development against their commitment and legal responsibility to the safety of area residents and farming practices.

We have made deputations at both Committee of the Whole meetings in Vaughan and York Region over the past 10 days. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture, The York Region Agriculture Committee and Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation have submitted letters of strong support for our case. These organizations represent the interests of thousands of area residents. **Our plea is for leadership, reason and common sense to prevail** in the policy direction you give planners as it relates to aggressively buffering farmland from urban development. At stake are the safety of area residents and the future of our farming practices. We urge you not to let this opportunity pass.

Our farm, Upper Cold Creek Farm is situated immediately adjacent to the Omega Development lands in the southern and western most area of Block 40/47. The 200 acres are active lands used by our cattle throughout the spring, summer and fall. And it is here that we need a best practice buffer. We harbour grave concerns around the safety of future residents as they come into proximity with farm animals and farming practices. And from our perspective, our concerns as abutting land owners and farmers are based on the issues of trespass, harassment of livestock, conflict around use of farm machinery, *bio-security*, invasive plants, liability, litter, vandalism and privacy. We were here first, we are not changing the land use and to be clear, we are in the Greenbelt and we **cannot** change the land use. The developer is – the onus must be on the developer to accommodate the buffer.

One of the reasons we are so concerned that Regional Council exert leadership in this situation is the very discouraging draft plan of subdivision, which was reported on and submitted by the planning department of the City of Vaughan last week. **It made no mention of the Special Provisional Area 1, which is the area Vaughan City Councilors', called out for proper buffering to reflect the incompatible nature of the abutting land uses.** I consider this a firm slap to the face of policy and I am extraordinarily disappointed that City staff allowed this plan to pass their

muster and City Councilors' did not call them nor the developers out on this gross oversight or arrogant abuse of respect for authority.

Furthermore, for the record the buffer recommendation approved by Vaughan was left out (an apparent error) in the original OPA744 submission to York Region, and when it was re-inserted in June it was watered down after lobbying by the developer. And, in the Vaughan City staff report on conditions of block plan approval submitted **yesterday**, the condition to establish a suitable buffer respecting compatibility issues with the adjacent farm uses was NOT included. This important issue is being swept under the carpet.

We continue writing in an effort to maintain our farming lifestyle and help create an environment that will allow our children and future generations to continue in the traditions set out by our grandfather, Grant Glassco (who donated 500 acres of his farm land to the Ontario Heritage Trust to preserve this land in the public interest). Soon the developers will be gone with their profits while we and the future landowners/residents to our north will live on to deal with the issues of incompatibility between our properties and all that brings to local government and the community.

In this respect, we appeal to the common sense and responsibility of the City of Vaughan and Region of York to take a leadership role in establishing a fulsome and respectful buffering policy when urban development abuts active farming and Greenbelt lands.

To do anything short of this is an abdication of responsibility to the safety and enjoyment of future resident's homes and the destruction of a way of life and contribution to Ontario's economy and food supply.

Sincerely,

Gill Evans and David Toyne
Upper Cold Creek Farm
10240 Pine Valley Drive
Woodbridge, Ontario

Cc

Jeff Leal, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Ted McMeekin, Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing
Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation and MPP for Vaughan
Premier Kathleen Wynne
Mark Wales, President of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Kim Empringham, York Region Agriculture Committee
Burkhard Mausberg, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation
Suzanne Karajaberkian, Environmental Defence