



Councillor Paula Fletcher, Chair  
Parks and Environment Committee  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

October 6, 2009

Dear Councillor Fletcher,

The Toronto Environmental Alliance, Environmental Defence, and the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance request that the City of Toronto submit a request to the Provincial Government to expand the Greenbelt further into Toronto through the Humber and Don River valleys.

The Humber and Don River valleys are treasured pieces of Toronto's natural heritage. The Humber and Don Rivers run through many regional and municipal boundaries. A decision made within any one of these political boundaries (especially upstream) that increases the stresses resulting from human activity on to these lands jeopardizes all the land that is part of the affected ecosystem.

Both the Humber and Don Rivers originate in lands protected by Ontario's Greenbelt, yet Toronto's portion of these lands are not included in the Greenbelt.

Greenbelt designation for all the City and TRCA owned Humber and Don River valley lands would help ensure an ecosystem-wide level of protection for these lands. It would eliminate potential stresses from human activity that currently could result from planning or development decisions made by one political jurisdiction. It would acknowledge that the natural environment does not recognize political boundaries

Moreover, Greenbelt designation for the Humber and Don River valley lands would help to fulfill objectives of the City of Toronto's award-winning Official Plan and has several links to Official Plan policies:

*The natural environment is complex. It does not recognize boundaries and there are limits to the stresses resulting from human activity that it can absorb. To be good stewards of the natural environment we must acknowledge that it has no boundaries*

*and we must respect its limits.* (Toronto Official Plan – 3.4 The Natural Environment)

*To support strong communities, a competitive economy and high quality of life, public and private city-building activities and changes to the built environment, including public works, will be environmentally friendly, based on... b) protecting, restoring and enhancing the health and integrity of the natural ecosystem, supporting bio-diversity in the City and targeting ecological improvement, paying particular attention to...iv) natural linkages between the natural heritage system and other green spaces;* (Policies 3.4.1)

Applying to bring the Greenbelt further into Toronto will connect the City's two and a half million residents with the farmland that provides us with local food and the green space that helps clean our air and water. By encouraging a more tangible relationship to the Greenbelt we will build a greater awareness and support for the farming communities and ecological systems that surround the City.

Bringing the popular Greenbelt into the heart of Canada's largest city will help bolster Toronto's well earned image as a "City within a Park," as a "Clean and Beautiful City," and could support the City's partnership with the TRCA's "Living City" vision.

February 2010 is the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of Ontario's Greenbelt. The Toronto Environmental Alliance, Environmental Defence, and the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance are working with a variety of municipal and regional stakeholders to expand the Greenbelt as a way to celebrate this important anniversary.

Thank you for your attention on this important matter. We look forward to working together to further protect Toronto's vital natural heritage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Franz Hartmann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'F' and 'H'.

Franz Hartmann, Executive Director  
Toronto Environmental Alliance