

**Executive Committee**

Clerk's Office  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen St W  
Toronto, ON, M5H 2N2

May 20, 2025

**RE: CC30.5 - Proposed By-law Amendment to Provide Access to Social Infrastructure**

Dear Mayor Chow and Toronto City Councillors,

I am writing on behalf of ClimateFast to strongly oppose item CC30.5 - Proposed By-law Amendment to Provide Access to Social Infrastructure.

Thirteen years ago a group of dedicated people ventured to Ottawa to demand the Canadian government take action to protect our children from the greatest threat humanity has ever faced: climate change. This protest, held at the gates of Parliament over twelve days, resulted in more than 100 sitting Members of Parliament pledging their support and promising to do more to mitigate the worst impacts of this looming crisis. This was just the start for ClimateFast. Today, we are a grassroots climate group of over 2000 members (mostly in the GTA) that fights for real, meaningful and equitable action to save our planet and all that live on it.

Since those days on the Hill, ClimateFast members have participated in, supported, and organized innumerable actions - small demonstrations at local TTC stations, candlelit vigils near UofT, media events at Queen's Park, and major marches through the downtown core. Each of these actions was a call *IN* to the public and our elected officials to help us create a safer, healthier and prosperous Toronto. And a call *OUT* to those standing in the way of needed change.

As a grassroots organization, we use demonstrations to educate and to agitate. To move the needle. To create change. And while asking for change is not easy and oftentimes it makes people uncomfortable (especially when the status quo works for them), as activists we feel an obligation to point out injustices, inequities and harm.

ClimateFast is an independent organization that relies on the donations of individuals. As a result, we do not have the funding that major institutions or corporations have access to for marketing campaigns or lobbying. Our access to the public, and in many cases the media and elected leadership, is through our protests and rallies. Most of which are quite joyous - with music, dance, art, family activities and sometimes (ironically) bubbles.

The proposed bylaw will severely limit, if not completely remove, our ability to protest inaction on climate and environmental issues. The areas being identified in the bylaw would make it impossible to hold any sort of demonstration in Toronto. By restricting our ability to assemble for a protest in most areas of the City, the Council will be silencing our voices. The council would be in effect limiting our freedom of speech and removing our right to assemble.

We understand that the sitting Council of 2025 may not see this bylaw as an endangerment to our democracy, and consider it to be a valid response to a perceived threat. However, this is a time when (with the erosion of many democracies, equities and social progress globally) we should be shoring up defenses against a similar decline in our own country. However, this bylaw would do the opposite, sending us down a slippery slope that will be very hard to come off of, and without knowing where it will end.

ClimateFast, therefore, urges this council to vote "no" to this bylaw; work with the Toronto Police Services who have already confirmed their protocols and practices work to fairly and lawfully manage illegal and/or , violent acts; and, recognize that a citizen's right to demonstrate, to assemble and to free speech must be vehemently protected if we want to continue to better our city, our country, and our planet.

Sincerely,

Susan Bakshi, Co-Chair  
ClimateFast