



March 23, 2026

Mayor Chow and Toronto City Council

**Subject: MM39.59 - Toronto Must Have a Say in Waterfront Decisions**

The Federation of South Toronto Residents' Associations (FoSTRA) is a community-based organization that currently represents 27 residents' associations (RAs) in the five downtown wards - Wards 4, 9, 10, 11, and 13 - and, through these RAs, hundreds of thousands of Toronto's residents. Notably, these RAs represent many tens of thousands of residents on and near the waterfront whose lives are the most directly impacted by changes in island airport operations.

We strongly support the motion that Toronto Must Have a Say in Waterfront Decisions. As an organization dedicated to local advocacy and ensuring residents have a meaningful voice in the evolution of their city and communities, we consider it fundamental to democracy that all orders of government must include the residents of our city, and their elected municipal representatives, in all decisions about the future of our city, including our waterfront. This includes opposing the unilateral expropriation of any land within the City of Toronto. Our growing, densely populated downtown wards cannot continue to lose precious outdoor public space.

In 2024 when PortsToronto, since rebranded as the Toronto Port Authority, was studying options to meet Transport Canada Runway End Safety Area (RESA) requirements for growing passenger traffic at Billy Bishop Toronto Centre Airport (BBTCA), FoSTRA conducted a comprehensive survey of our members designed to understand the diverse perspectives on BBTCA and its impact on our waterfront. Survey results highlighted the complex interplay of public concerns, economic considerations, and land use preferences surrounding the airport and its current level of commercial operations.

While PortsToronto and its commercial clients, Porter Airlines and Nieuport Aviation, were leveraging the need for runway safety improvements to press for airport expansion through the RESA 3 option, FoSTRA supported City staff's recommended RESA 1 as a balanced approach that preserved the airport's existing commercial operations while having the lowest incremental



negative impacts on livability on Toronto's waterfront. We noted that passenger demand at BBTCA had decreased materially; most recent publicly available data indicates that demand remains below 2019 levels. This is not surprising given that Porter has shifted flights to Pearson, where it is focusing its expansion plans, leveraging the natural economic advantage of a larger connecting hub airport facility.

Having called in 2024 for future planning around BBTCA to prioritize transparent engagement that fosters public trust, data-driven analysis, and a forward-thinking waterfront vision that reflects the best interests of our city, we were appalled by recent threats from the Premier to expropriate Toronto's portion of BBTCA lands and force upon our city a major airport expansion, including allowing jets. We continue to firmly believe that our city's residents deserve a voice in any decisions that change the future uses of BBTCA and the Toronto Islands where it's located.

FoSTRA has consistently advocated for projects to deliver desperately needed affordable housing in our city. We are gravely concerned that a Provincially imposed dictate to allow commercial jets at BBTCA would cost thousands of new affordable housing units by slashing planned building heights on Ookwemin Minising island.

Toronto faces many challenges in effectively supporting its growing population, including a densifying downtown core with limited outdoor public space, and a critical lack of affordable housing for vital workers. The imposition by the Province of ill-conceived major changes around our waterfront would only exacerbate the scale of these challenges. It is vital that Toronto's residents have a say in decisions about the future of our waterfront.

Sincerely,

Rick Green  
**Chair**

cc: Mayor Chow, Deputy Mayor Malik, Councillor Moise, Councillor Saxe, Councillor Bravo, Councillor Perks, Councillor Fletcher, MPP Glover, MPP Bell, MPP Wong-Tam, MPP Gilmour, MP Chi Nguyen, MP Evan Solomon, MP Bardeesy, Dr. Danielle Martin, Minister of Transport McKinnon