



September 4, 2018

The OHI today released an important statement, co-signed by 15 organizations, on the need for mutually respectful dialogue and fulsome consultation practices between the new Ontario government and organizations engaged in the agricultural, biodiversity, conservation, development, and environmental sectors.

The statement evolved at and following a Green BBQ and Forum held in August\*\*. It is offered as a lens for both organizations in the sectors mentioned above and for the government.

The need for a philosophy of mutually respectful dialogue and fulsome consultation is real, in part due to the relative paucity of details in the environmental platform of the Ontario PC party during the last election and corresponding questions raised within organizations working on environmental protection and aligned issues.

With the business of the new government about to click in to a higher gear after Labour Day, we hope that the statement provides a helpful tone for all intended recipients of this e-mail, encouraging discussion and consultation to further Ontario's transition to a healthier environment, a sustainable economy, and improved social wellbeing.

Sincerely,

*Andrew*

Andrew McCammon

Executive Director

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\*\* The Green BBQ and Forum was rather spontaneous, GTA-focused event staged by five organizations: the Ontario Headwaters Institute, the Ontario Environment Network, Save the Maskinonge, the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition, and Mount Wolfe Farm – our host for the day. Food costs were off-set by kind donations from the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition and Environmental Defence, on behalf of the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance. About 40 organizations were invited; 23 people from 16 organizations attended; and 15 of the original 40 invited organizations signed this statement. 37.5% - not bad for August☺. We thank all the partners and participants in the event and in the development of the attached statement.

## Reaching out to the new Ontario Government: September 4, 2018

A group of Ontario organizations from the agricultural, biodiversity, conservation, development, and environmental sectors held a somewhat spontaneous, GTA-local Green BBQ & Forum in August, at which we discussed developing a fulsome relationship with the new Ontario Government, led by Premier Ford.

At this time, we share the key take-aways from the Forum with sister organizations and others across the province, including key government representatives.

Areas of consensus on our alignment with the new government include desires to:

- Establish mutually respectful dialogue and meaningful consultation practices with agency staff, MPPs, Cabinet Ministers, and the Premier to better understand the government's environmental priorities;
- Embrace the government's commitment to effective, transparent, and accountable environmental and aligned policies and programs; and,
- Contribute to moving Ontario toward new or improved system strategies that address the triple bottom line of a healthy environment, a sustainable economy, and social wellbeing.

Specific issues which we seek to share with the new government at this time include that:

- The current state of environmental degradation in Ontario is unacceptable and should be reversed. Ontario's health, economy, and social wellbeing depend on a clean and healthy environment for air, water, food, and broader ecosystem services. We believe our perspectives can help the government balance environmental protection with sustainable development, thereby enhancing social wellbeing.
- While we welcome the government's commitment to more effectiveness, transparency, and accountability for Ontario, we think there may be needs for increased resources and better co-ordination in the sectors listed above, especially related to improved consultation practices, their background documents, and both better monitoring and public access to data. We believe that our perspectives can help inform fulsome community consultation and contribute to sound and respected government decision-making; and,
- As development continues to increase and intensify across Ontario, and as the climate changes, conservation and sustainable practices will become more important in protecting the ecological goods and services upon which we all rely. Conservation and sustainable practices can also reduce costs and create jobs in three key areas discussed at our Forum: protecting biodiversity, the transition to a low-carbon economy, and the shift to sustainable agriculture. We hope our perspectives can help the government protect Ontario's ecological integrity, expand employment in emerging sectors, and grow the overall economy.

As we understand it, the Ontario Government will be moving to allocate \$500M for environmental initiatives that will include a fund to invest in new emissions reduction technology; enforce air quality programs and protect waterways; hire more conservation officers to improve enforcement at major polluters; and commit resources to reduce litter.

Naturally, details on these commitments are important, and the signatories overleaf seek mutually respectful dialogue and meaningful consultation practices with the new government. We believe our perspectives, expertise, and networks of engaged organizations can be helpful in securing an enhanced triple bottom line for Ontario's future.

We suggest the best path forward is for both our sister organizations and the new government to work together toward furthering Ontario's transition to a healthier environment, a sustainable economy, and improved social wellbeing.

## Signatories

Alton Grange Association  
Linda Lockyer

Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation  
Don Kerr

Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment  
Robert Patrick

Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario  
Ali English

EcoSpark  
Joyce Chau

Land Over Landings  
Mary Delaney

Mount Wolfe Farm  
Debbe Crandall

Ontario Environment Network  
OEN Steering Committee

Ontario Headwaters Institute  
Andrew McCammon

Ontario Soil Regulation Task Force  
Ian McLaurin

POWER - Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources  
Doris Treleaven

Save the Maskinonge  
Debbie Gordon

Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition  
Margaret Prophet

STORM – Save the Oak Ridges Moraine  
Cindy Sutch

Trout Unlimited  
Silvia D'Amelio