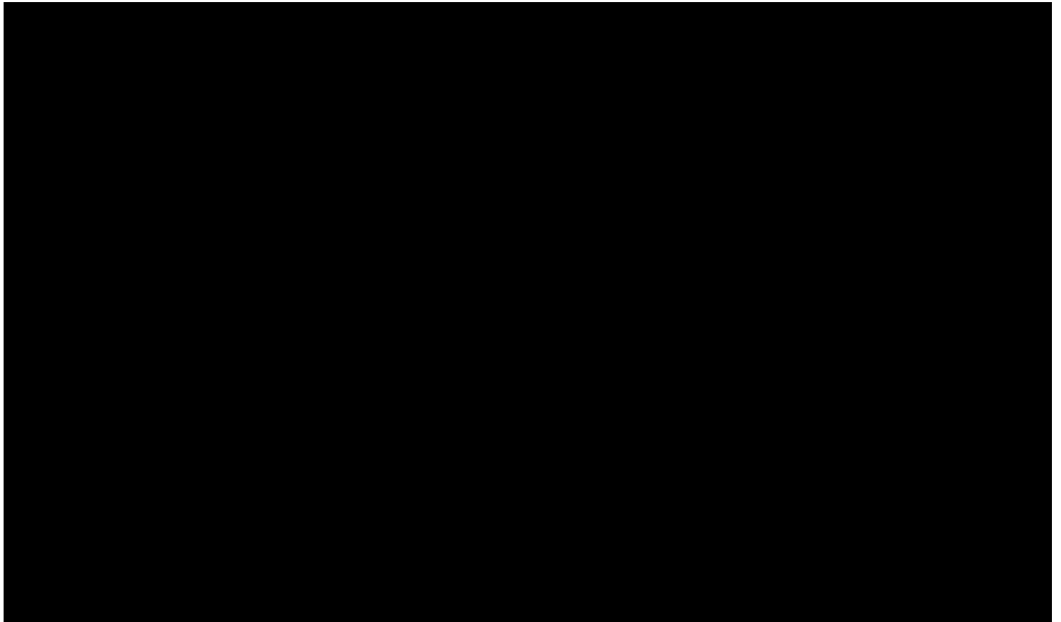


Cc:



Subject:

WOWC ERO Submissions

Attachments:

ERO Posting 019-8369 Proposed Planning Act^J City of Toronto Act^J and Municipal Act Bill 185 FINAL.pdf; ERO Posting 019-8371 Proposed Changes to the Development Charges Act FINAL.pdf; ERO Posting 019-8462 2024 Proposed Provincial Planning Statement FINAL.pdf

You don't often get email from kate@wowc.ca. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Good afternoon Minister Calandra,

On behalf of Warden Glen McNeil, Chair of the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus please find attached our submissions to the Environmental Registry on the following;

- ERO Posting 019-8369 Proposed Planning Act and Municipal Act Changes, bill 185
- ERO Posting 019-8371, Proposed Changes to the Development Charges Act
- ERO Posting 019-8462, Proposed Provincial Planning Statement

Best regards,

Kate Burns Gallagher
Executive Director
Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus
kate@wowc.ca



May 9, 2024

By Email: PlanningConsultation@ontario.ca
Provincial Land Use Plans Branch
13th Floor, 777 Bay St
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

RE: ERO Posting 019-8369

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus to comment ERO Posting 019-8369 on the proposed Planning Act, City of Toronto Act, and Municipal Act changes proposed through Bill 185.

The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus and our fifteen upper and single tier municipalities are committed to enhancing the prosperity and overall well-being of rural and small urban communities across Western Ontario. The WOWC wishes to express its support for the Province's recent efforts and measures toward increasing housing supply throughout Ontario over the next 10 years.

The WOWC reiterates its commitment and support for the courage to take bold action to increase the supply of housing and to improve housing affordability in Ontario, and notes that Bill 185 is intended to improve service delivery while saving people and businesses time and money.

In our collective efforts to increase our supply and affordability of housing it must be understood that the landscape across rural Western Ontario includes significant swaths of rural and agricultural lands, including prime agricultural areas. The WOWC encourages the protection of Ontario's prime agricultural areas for their long-term agricultural use as a key objective.

The WOWC acknowledges the provincial initiative to enhance certainty for municipalities by revising third-party appeal rights. These revisions aim to support municipalities as they update their Official Plans and Zoning Bylaws, ensuring implementation of guided growth and as-of-right development is not delayed by lengthy and costly OLT processes.

The WOWC has reservations regarding the potential for private applications for settlement area boundary expansions at any time, as well as the restoration of appeal rights following refusal or non-decision on such expansions. These measures may divert municipal resources away from crucial planning efforts aimed at facilitating efficient growth within planned service areas.

Reintroducing appeals for settlement area boundary expansion requests could disrupt community and infrastructure planning conducted through Official Plan processes, destabilizing the certainty that other measures in Bill 185 were meant to accomplish.

If it is the Province's intent to allow adjudication of settlement area boundary decisions through the OLT, we suggest that such appeals should only be permitted at the time a decision is made on new Official Plans or Official Plan Updates. This will provide both municipalities, partner agencies/ministries, developer stakeholders, and the general public with clarity regarding when such matters are to be determined. Once settlement area boundaries are set, all can focus on implementation rather than responding to new requests.

This right of appeal was removed from the Planning Act in 2004 and has since proven to be one of the most important and effective tools for supporting 'good planning' as it ensures municipalities are able to lead, and focus their efforts and limited resources on, planning for the growth of their communities in a comprehensive and coordinated manner (i.e. ensuring logical and cost effective expansions of water and wastewater infrastructure and other public services necessary to support the planned growth, ensuring efficient use of land, supporting/ensuring increased density and intensification, supporting a range of housing options etc.) rather than constantly having to react to one off, privately initiated, settlement expansion proposals.

The WOWC additionally has concerns that limitations on third-party appeals to the might prompt concerned members of the public to exert heightened pressure on, agencies, and First Nations rights. This could potentially lead to alternative avenues pursued by concerned members of the public, such as judicial review, with uncertain costs, timeframes, and procedures.

If the province moves forward with restricting third-party appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal, there may be benefit to further articulating that decisions that are not appealed, or decisions by the tribunal, are not subject to further review.

The WOWC also acknowledges the province's inclusion of lapsing provisions to encourage swift progression of development proposals towards construction. While we have only a few remaining legacy subdivisions approved by the province before March 27, 1995, without lapsing dates, we are concerned that the inflexibility surrounding these approvals could prompt proponents to appeal conditions, potentially delaying or circumventing their lapsing.

The WOWC proposes a review of provisions allowing proponents to appeal subdivision conditions up to final approval (or lapsing) or an expedited process to prevent municipalities from investing significant resources in addressing such appeals at the tribunal.

Therefore, the WOWC urges the province to prioritize timely and thorough engagement on proposed regulations via the Environmental Registry and stakeholder involvement. We are willing to collaborate with the province in facilitating this process.

Regarding the particular regulation-making authorities outlined in Bill 185, the WOWC acknowledges the provincial initiative to establish suitable standards that can expedite development processes and obviate the necessity for each local municipality to revise plans and by-laws to promote enhanced housing supply or address other shared priorities.

Balancing the need for expediting the approvals process, it's equally crucial to ensure sufficient consideration is given to planning for essential community infrastructure such as schools, long-term care homes, and hospitals. This alignment of resources, systems, and infrastructure is essential for fostering robust, healthy, and cohesive communities.

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Regarding the authority to grant assistance, we recommend that the province offer clearer guidance on whether regulations under this act are expected to be extended to multiple municipalities, potentially creating competition among communities across Ontario to attract investment, or to harmonize incentives for particular initiatives aimed at drawing specific investments to specific communities within Ontario.

As always, the WOWC appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the changes proposed through Bill 185. We look forward to working with the provincial government and our municipal counterparts to protect Western Ontario's agricultural land while sustaining and growing Ontario's housing supply.

When we work collaboratively together our communities reap the rewards.

Sincerely,



Glen McNeil
Chair, Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus

cc.

Minister Paul Calandra
MPPs Western Ontario
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Western Ontario Municipalities



May 9, 2024

By Email: MFPB@ontario.ca
Provincial Land Use Plans Branch
13th Floor, 777 Bay St
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

RE: ERO Posting 019-8371

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus to comment on ERO Posting 019-8371 on the proposed changes to the Development Charges Act.

The proposed changes are welcome partial reversals of previous changes that impact the ability of municipalities to cover the costs of servicing and planning for growing communities.

We would like to see the legislation take a further step to reinstate both housing services and the cost of land as eligible DC costs. Together, these changes are costing municipalities \$4 billion over a 10-year period and will have a material impact on municipalities' ability to invest in community housing.

As always, the WOWC appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the Development Charges Act changes proposed through Bill 185. We look forward to working with the provincial government and our municipal counterparts to protect Western Ontario's agricultural land while sustaining and growing Ontario's housing supply.

When we work collaboratively together, our communities reap the rewards.

Sincerely,



Glen McNeil
Chair, Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus

cc.

Minister Paul Calandra
MPPs Western Ontario
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Western Ontario Municipalities



May 9, 2024

By Email: growthplanning@ontario.ca
Provincial Land Use Plans Branch
13th Floor, 777 Bay St
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

RE: ERO Posting 019-8462

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus to comment on ERO Posting 019-8462 on the proposed 2024 Provincial Planning Statement through the Environmental Registry of Ontario.

The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus and our fifteen upper and single tier municipalities are committed to enhancing the prosperity and overall well-being of rural and small urban communities across Western Ontario. The WOWC wishes to express its support for the Province's recent efforts and measures toward increasing housing supply throughout Ontario over the next 10 years.

Many of our partner municipalities deliver planning services to lower tier municipalities as well as a range of housing services, including the construction of County owned/operated housing.

This letter outlines PPS policy modifications perceived as advantageous by the WOWC and its partnering municipalities, as they contribute to bolstering the availability of affordable housing in the region. Additionally, it underscores areas of concern that could impede our capacity to efficiently plan for cohesive communities and safeguard natural and agricultural resources.

Agriculture Policy Changes

In our collective efforts to increase our supply and affordability of housing it must be understood that the landscape across rural Western Ontario includes significant swaths of rural and agricultural lands, including prime agricultural areas. The WOWC encourages the protection of Ontario's prime agricultural areas for their long-term agricultural use as a key objective. The removal of the permission to create up to three residential lots in prime agricultural areas is greatly appreciated.

The proposed PPS mandates the allowance of up to two Additional Residential Units (ARUs) on lots within Prime Agricultural Areas where residential dwellings are permitted. Newly introduced stipulations require these ARUs to be "limited in scale" and to "minimize land use for non-agricultural purposes."

We recommend that the wording of the proposed new policy be changed to "up to two additional dwelling units may be permitted," instead of the current language of "shall be permitted".

We appreciate the proposed policies that advocate for the clustering of Additional Residential Units (ARUs) and aim to minimize their impact on farmland.

In addition, the proposed maximum of two ARUs per farm lot needs to be clarified to indicate that only one of those units is permitted in an ancillary structure (i.e. the other must be located within the principal dwelling) which would be consistent with the direction on ARUs in settlements and minimize the impact to agricultural lands/operations. A further best practice would be to limit ARUs to a maximum of two per farm operation (i.e. regardless of the number of parcels comprising that farm operation).

The surplus farm dwelling severance policy (4.3.3.1 c) needs to be clarified to include all dwellings, principal plus ARU can be severed as a residence surplus to an agricultural operation and that no further severance would be permitted from the cluster.

The suggested amendments to the PPS policy, mandating an “agricultural systems approach,” offering guidance on Agricultural Impact Assessments, and bolstering support for the agri-food network, are all viewed favorably and embraced.

Employment Lands

The narrowing of the Employment Areas definition risks eliminating protection for business parks, encompassing lighter industrial, institutional, and office uses. Such a change might present economic development hurdles for municipalities. Revising existing planned land uses and infrastructure within municipal Official Plans may become necessary, potentially incurring additional expenses if new Employment Areas must be identified.

Given that planning authorities may designate lands for employment purposes beyond a 30-year horizon, there is a requirement for added clarity to assist rural and small urban municipalities in gauging the necessary supply of Employment Lands over the long term. A substantial surplus of employment lands would be essential to justify the removal of employment areas.

While the proposed policies offer municipalities increased flexibility, the infrastructure and servicing expenses associated with industrial lands impose significant financial burdens. Slower-growing rural and small urban municipalities may struggle to manage the infrastructure costs of a larger supply of Employment Lands that distinguish between protected employment lands and broader areas where people work. Flexibility in converting employment lands, where suitable, can be attained without narrowing the definition of employment.

Considering that the Ministry of Finance growth projections do not include employment forecasting, we look forward to the Province providing further guidance to municipalities on employment forecasting.

Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

The proposal suggests eliminating municipal comprehensive reviews as a prerequisite for settlement area boundary expansions. This marks a notable departure, as comprehensive reviews have been a fixture since the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement. The WOWC views the increased flexibility for municipalities to contemplate settlement boundary adjustments outside of Official Plan Reviews positively. Such flexibility enables partner municipalities to address the distinct growth requirements and demands of individual settlement areas, which may not be adequately captured through regional market studies or population projections.



The WOWC remains steadfast in urging the province to acknowledge the vital role of infrastructure in fostering growth within settlement areas. Securing funding support for infrastructure to meet the demands accompanying settlement area boundary expansions is paramount for municipalities. The proposed policies within the PPS could exert substantial pressure on municipal infrastructure, including sewage and water systems, roads, bridges, and stormwater management. Access to supportive provincial funding and expedited approval processes for both replacement and new infrastructure is essential for municipalities to effectively accommodate projected growth.

Summary

As always, the WOWC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed policy changes and looks forward to working with the provincial government and our municipal counterparts to protect Western Ontario's agricultural land while sustaining and growing Ontario's housing supply.

When we work collaboratively together our communities reap the rewards.

Sincerely,



Glen McNeil
Chair, Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus

cc.

Minister Paul Calandra
MPPs Western Ontario
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