

Government should respond to issue

The following letter, to Premier Kathleen Wynne, was submitted to the Sentinel.

Your government has received requests from the Town of Georgina, the Lake Simcoe Regional Conservation Authority and countless members of the public. All are requesting that the Minister of Municipal Affairs issues a Zoning Order to prohibit the DG Group from building a residential development on the Paradise Beach-Island Grove Provincially Significant Wetland located on the shores of Lake Simcoe.

The Minister, the Hon. Bill Mauro, has simply refused to acknowledge these requests. The government's actions are intolerable; it is prepared to allow a Provincially Significant Wetland to be destroyed due to an apparent misguided principle.

Can the government not put aside the political optics of this whole unfortunate affair and enforce its own Provincial Policy Statement concerning the protection of Ontario's environment?

The Town of Georgina, the LSRCA and the DG Group itself were prepared to save the Paradise Beach-Island Grove PSW through a land swap that would have seen the development on other land that the DG Group owns. However, this other land has been designated Greenbelt and therefore housing is presently not permitted.

I commend the government's creation of the Greenbelt. It is something of which it should be proud. I will, however, point out that its boundaries were arbitrarily formed and there is nothing beyond political expediency to prevent an adjusted designation and the resultant land swap.

Many years ago for some inexplicable reason the Paradise Beach-Island Grove PSW was incorporated into the future settlement area of the Town of Georgina. It went against all reason, even at that time, that a PSW was included. There is no reason that this cannot be corrected and the PSW designated according to the present day environmental guidelines that were initiated by your government. Finally, the creation of the Greenbelt was a marvellous endeavour but in the grand scheme of things protecting a PSW trumps protecting a small area of land that has been designated Greenbelt. Because the government apparently does not want to set a precedent concerning land swaps involving the Greenbelt, it has allowed an ill-considered decision to prevail.

Sometimes the correct course of action is not black or white, it's grey.

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