

Bates, Tamara

Subject: FW: Development Charges/Climate Emergency

From: Lyn Folkes <>

Sent: Sunday, April 28, 2024 4:42 PM

To: Bates, Tamara <Tamara.Bates@hamilton.ca>; clerk@hamilton.ca; Office of the Mayor <Officeofthe.Mayor@hamilton.ca>; Wilson, Maureen <Maureen.Wilson@hamilton.ca>; Kroetsch, Cameron <Cameron.Kroetsch@hamilton.ca>; Nann, Nrinder <Nrinder.Nann@hamilton.ca>; Hwang, Tammy <Tammy.Hwang@hamilton.ca>; Francis, Matt <Matt.Francis@hamilton.ca>; Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>; Pauls, Esther <Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca>; Danko, John-Paul <John-Paul.Danko@hamilton.ca>; Clark, Brad <Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca>; Beattie, Jeff <Jeff.Beattie@hamilton.ca>; Tadeson, Mark <Mark.Tadeson@hamilton.ca>; Cassar, Craig <Craig.Cassar@hamilton.ca>; Wilson, Alex <Alex.Wilson@hamilton.ca>; Spadafora, Mike <Mike.Spadafora@hamilton.ca>; McMeekin, Ted <Ted.McMeekin@hamilton.ca>

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Dear Council Members and members of Hamilton's Audit, Finance and Administration committee (for your next meeting on this topic),

I just received the following from SaveOur Streams Hamilton:

"Hamilton is currently giving a big discount on Development Charges (DCs) to industrial developers who want to build warehouses on Hamilton wetlands." and I know that, "If developers don't have to pay them, then taxpayers do!" and, "On May 2, 2024 will vote on whether or not to continue giving industrial developers discounts to pave [1300 acres of wetlands and farmland near Hamilton Airport](#). The AEGD was rezoned in 2015 for industrial use. A terrible decision that should be reversed."

I hope Council will not allow any discounts to industry to be dumped onto us - the cost of living is quickly increasing along with our global average temperatures! If you vote NO on this then that would be the smarter choice and I thank you very much for supporting Hamilton taxpayers. But I'm writing this letter in case you don't:

Although many climate initiatives have been introduced in Hamilton, I am still terribly distraught about the lack of attention being paid to the climate emergency when it comes to the province forcing bad planning decisions on our city.

If this 'forever damaging our future' warehouse-development discount is approved, this is just another example of how Hamilton, Ontario and Canada are showing the world exactly how backwards we are behaving compared to the rest of the developed world in regard to the global climate emergency. We need to vote NO to giving support to developers who want to degrade our good city, pave over our few remaining life-saving wetlands, accelerate the climate emergency and dump their costs unfairly onto taxpayers who CAN'T AFFORD THAT ANY LONGER. We're all feeling the pervasive cost of living increases today.

We need to seriously consider our climate in every decision we make now, and it would be incredibly irresponsible if not plain stupid to allow warehouses to be built on top of wetlands, or any natural land or farmlands today for that matter. These giant warehouses are mainly used to store the massive overconsumption of goods by our society that is causing the pollution, waste and loss of natural green space that is fueling climate warming. These warehouses create their own 'desert-like' environments that heat up our atmosphere physically in the space they occupy as well.

All of these facts lead to an acceleration of GHG emissions , poorer air and water quality, and heat in our atmosphere. And our atmosphere is already warming faster than ever seen before in human history. We are literally harming ourselves - that's why it's a global climate 'emergency.'

So, I ask you, "Is paving over wetlands and other cooling natural habitats (including meadows which are also valuable for a stable climate), a good idea if this kind of massive development will serve to accelerate the most dangerous emergency in our lives?

Is it smart to fill-in wetlands when our drinking water supply is at threat, including Lake Ontario which can go toxic with increasing temperatures mixed with the pollution we keep dumping into it. Is it smart to destroy natural habitats that are already so fragmented and struggling to support the wildlife that should be able to live here? Nevermind rare species, we could lose most of our native fauna if we don't act like we're in an emergency. Etc., etc, etc.

We need our farmland which is still disappearing rapidly around Hamilton. Urban Sprawl continues because our province is blatantly ignoring the climate emergency. I'm so ashamed of Ontario today. We need to work much harder to stop these incredible damaging developments from happening here.

If any more mega-warehouses are approved here, it will be an international embarrassment for us and the beginning of the end for Hamilton residents' health. We need to move towards a path of healing our world, and healing Ontario from the terribly unthoughtful and destructive plans of the PC Ford government.

This literally makes me feel sick. I'd move but Hamilton is my home town and it needs me today -- but it needs you more. PLEASE don't let these warehouses destroy what we need to survive into this accelerating climate chaos across Canada.

We can't afford to ignore the climate emergency like Ontario continues to do. I'm terrified and if you approve these warehouses and give these destructive companies discounts that I will be forced to pay for, I think we are all in very serious trouble.

My family's lives are in your hands today. This is the moment that is the most important turning point in our lives. Will you help us mitigate this quickly warming climate that will throw all our lives into continual suffering much sooner than you think?

Or will you dangerously pretend it's not happening like the PC Party?

In reality, the PCs are fast becoming the equivalent of Darth Vader in our world. Please don't let the PC's allow you to ignore the most important part of this decision:

It will significantly add to the problem of our warming climate if we allow these warehouses to be built in our city.

Don't turn a blind eye - you know that Hamiltonians have voted against urban sprawl and this is just an extension of that same problem.

In Ontario, we must save every bit of our Greenbelt that is left, build housing within our existing boundaries and stop supporting fossil fuel-driven mega-projects like urban sprawl, new major highways, and warehouses that promote overconsumption and excessive use of fossil fuel transport systems (including lots of air flights!).

We have to make smarter decisions based on what's healthiest for our planet and human health today. Giant warehouses will only help to hurt our society, and every one of us in Hamilton.

I don't want my money used to hurt my family, PLEASE! No developer discounts unless the project helps with the climate emergency in a significant way. We need housing, I understand that, but we don't need more 'STUFF' stored in warehouses. Save Garner Marsh - all the wetlands are important today to conserve our water quantity and quality. We need clean water, we don't need more hectares of non-pervious, flood-promoting surfaces like these warehouses create.

This is a bad idea in SO many ways.

Please think very hard about this decision and act in the taxpayers' best interest - no discounts to wealthy companies, no mega-warehouses in Hamilton. Go stand in the middle of the parking lot at a giant

warehouse for an hour on a hot day at noon this summer, and then tell me these huge impervious surfaces don't add heat and pollutants to the air we have to breathe.

Our well-being is far more fragile than people realize - our physical and mental health and our democracy are all at risk today mainly due to poor provincial management. Let's not make that any worse please.

Thank you,
Lyn Folkes, retired environmental scientist
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