

**Ministry of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks**

**Ministère de l'Environnement,
de la Protection de la nature et des
Parcs**



Office of the Minister

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357-2021-1430

May 4, 2021

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada
Email: ec.ministre-minister.ec@canada.ca

Dear Minister Wilkinson:

Thank you for your letters of May 3, 2021, regarding your decisions on the designation requests for both the Bradford Bypass Project and Greater Toronto Area West Corridor Project (GTA West Project).

I am pleased that you have recognized Ontario's current regulatory processes in place to ensure environmental protections for the Byford Bypass Project so that our province can move forward with this much-needed infrastructure project without unnecessary delay.

However, your decision to not recognize these same processes for the GTA West Project is not consistent with science-based federal analysis of this project. These newly found concerns about the potential impacts of the project are disconcerting, especially since as recently as March 2020, the experts at the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada reviewed the evidence and declined to take further action on the GTA West project.

It's unclear what your decision to designate the GTA West Project will mean for this project, and it seems unnecessary since the Impact Assessment Agency concluded that environmental impacts would be addressed through federal and provincial processes that already exist.

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has already started work on a provincial Individual Environmental Assessment (EA) process, and my ministry is working closely with MTO on a regulation that would ensure strong environmental oversight, including requiring MTO to assess potential impacts to species at risk in consultation with federal agencies. A parallel federal impact assessment is redundant and will cause unnecessary delays for this project that is urgently needed to ensure our transportation infrastructure can support the growth of the communities it will serve.

As part of our *Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan*, my ministry is committed to an EA program that ensures strong environmental oversight while reducing delays on projects that matter most to communities in Ontario. Provincial staff will connect with federal counterparts to determine a path forward with the goal of making sure this critical roadway and transit infrastructure is built in a timely way to improve the movement of people and goods, and fight traffic congestion in a way that remains protective of the environment.

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It is my sincere hope that any decisions for a full federal Impact Assessment for the GTA West Project will be science-based and not made arbitrarily. We are fully committed to finding a mutually acceptable path forward.

If you have any questions, please reach out to me directly. We look forward to receiving more information from the federal government, which has already acknowledged how robust Ontario's Individual EA process is.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Yurek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeff" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Yurek".

Jeff Yurek
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

c: The Honourable Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation