



Ms. Marie Lemay
Chair, National Capital Commission
202-40 Elgin Street
Ottawa ON K1P 1C7

June 13th 2010

Re: Protection of the South March Highlands

Dear Madam,

I am writing to ask that the NCC intervene to stop the Terry Fox Drive extension road, which threatens an ecologically sensitive forest and other ecosystems in the South March Highlands in the National Capital Region.

By helping to prevent the degradation of this important near-urban forest to development you will ensure that the region's ecological assets are protected and that local communities will continue to benefit from the ecological services that green spaces provide, like clean air and water, healthy soil, and habitat for wildlife – including at least 18 species at risk that are known to occur in the area, such as the Blandings Turtle.

Decision-makers often ignore the fact that the farmland, forests and other green spaces within and surrounding urban areas provide an astonishing range of ecological services for free, like filtering and storing drinking water and preventing erosion by ensuring that riverbanks remain stable. Research by the David Suzuki Foundation and others has shown that nature's benefits are extremely valuable in monetary terms, and in some cases are truly priceless.

For example, last year, the David Suzuki Foundation tallied up the economic contribution of the ecological services provided by the Greenbelt in the Golden Horseshoe of southern Ontario. The research report, [Ontario's Wealth, Canada's Future: Appreciating the Value of the Greenbelt's Eco-Services](#), conservatively estimated that the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt provides \$2.6 billion a year in ecological services such as recreational opportunities, pollination, and capture and storage of carbon in its remnant forests, farmland, and rich soils.

Replacing ecological services with engineered and manufactured substitutes such as water-filtration plants and dykes or retention walls can cost millions of dollars. Some ecosystem services, such as the aesthetic and psychological benefits of urban forests, are impossible to replace at any price.

Close to 80 per cent of Canadians now live in towns and cities, in communities like the National Capital Region. As a consequence, most of our massive environmental and carbon footprint is directly related to the way we plan our neighbourhoods, including where people live and how far they have to travel to get to work, school, and the places where they shop.

The region must now choose whether to continue along the path of sprawling infrastructure and increased dependence on cars, or to stop sprawl and protect its remaining green spaces, like the South March Highlands. The Greenbelt in Ottawa represents a symbol of national significance for all Canadians by virtue of being within the nation's capital. By taking immediate action to protect the South March Highlands, the NCC has the opportunity to help create a greener, healthier future for communities that will kick-start a wave of smart, sustainable urban growth throughout the country.



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Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Moola'.

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Cc: Mayor Larry O'Brien, City of Ottawa
Paul Renaud, Coalition to Protect the South March Highlands