

## Citizens weren't asked for mandate on Greenbelt: reader

### OUR READERS WRITE

We are to have an election soon in Ontario under the guise of needing a mandate from the citizenry to stand up against potential tariffs. We are told by the present government that the fight may cost billions to Ontario taxpayers. If we want him as our leader again, Doug Fords' record thus far indicates we will have a leader trying to counter a deceptive bully to the south with similar tactics.

These tactics have already been used on us to distract, deceive and avoid any responsibility for poor decisions around a previous attempt to take land out of the Greenbelt, to not find real solutions to key healthcare problems and to bleed more money from education.

Meanwhile, there is the current deception in giving \$200 cheques to citizens, while the money (\$3 billion) clearly came from the citizens themselves to begin with and disproportionately from the middle- and working-class people of this province.

We were not asked for a mandate to sell off parts of the Greenbelt to wealthy developers to promote even more urban sprawl in Southern Ontario where each acre paved over will never again be prime farmland or forests or wetlands that are critical for our survival.

The Premier's current fixation on the 413 highway will increase a vicious cycle of congestion as more urban sprawl will inevitably surround the highway. Once again this compromises the Greenbelt. If the 407 were used as part of an alternative solution it would save billions for Ontario. There are other parts of the province that could take on sustainable growth without such damaging effects to our environment.

Interestingly, one of the Premier's first responses to the threat of tariffs from the U.S. was to suggest that LCBOs remove U.S. products. He sure loves to focus on alcohol! Remember a buck a beer? It reminds one of the joy he wanted us to share with him that we can now buy 24 beers for the weekend at a convenience store. What is the goal here?

Do we want sober participants in this province or addicted citizens distracted from dealing together with real issues? We have serious problems. This province needs to genuinely engage actively with everyone to find alternatives. Let us use the billions this government spends (on things like \$200 ?gifts?) and intends to spend (as on the 413), on meaningful solutions instead.

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