

Environmental Defence calls for cancelling proposed highway

Environmental Defence is calling on the Province not just to pause work on Highway 413, but to cancel it altogether.

The Province announced in December that it was suspending work on the environmental assessment of the GTA West Corridor that traverses Caledon as it runs from Highway 400 west, through town and south into Brampton and Halton Region. The corridor is slated to include a 400-series highway, which is informally known as Highway 413.

"If Ontario is serious about cutting carbon emissions, reducing traffic jams and creating sustainable communities, the proposed Highway 413 should be scrapped outright," commented Environmental Defence Executive Director Tim Gray. "Instead of building yet another toll highway, the Province should invest the money in public transit."

Following the U.N. climate talks, Ontario announced a temporary suspension (until spring) of the corridor's environmental assessment. If built, Highway 413 would pave over prime farmland, including a portion in Ontario's Greenbelt, and degrade the headwaters of the Credit and Humber Rivers.

The highway is intended primarily to move goods through the northwest portion of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Sony Rai, executive director of Sustainable Vaughan, observed. He also pointed out that if it's built, it would attract commuters as well. He added studies have shown new highways generate more traffic rather than reducing congestion.

"Placing a highway on productive farmland then building sprawl subdivisions is how we created the congestion problems we are facing today," Gray added. "Our pattern of growth needs to change to put people and public transit first. Proceeding with this unnecessary highway represents backwards thinking."

Members of the public concerned about the highway can sign a petition and order free lawn signs at Stopthe413.ca