

Jones presents Badlands petition to legislature at Queen's Park

The fight against the proposed parking lot near the Cheltenham Badlands gained some more momentum Monday.

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones presented a petition to the Legislature at Queen's Park, calling on the government to fully fund the Cheltenham Badlands Management Plan, which includes but is not limited to the fencing of the geological feature; viewing platform; boardwalks; perimeter fencing(s); trail maintenance and other accessory requirements as part of a complete and approved management plan.

The Badlands, on the south side of Olde Base Line Road, between Chinguacousy and Creditview Roads, are owned by the Ontario Heritage Trust and managed by Bruce Trail Conservancy.

The site is a deposit of Queenston Shale. The soil and vegetation have been worn away at the site by erosion, and the result is a formation of red rock with deep gullies running through it.

Concerns have been expressed over the safety of people visiting the site. There is currently no designated parking area, meaning cars have to be parked at the side of the road where there are numerous steep hills. Sightlines in the area are a worry too.

Peel Regional council in May approved the construction of a parking area just east of the site that would be able to accommodate 33 cars and two buses. There are also plans to set up a viewing area.

But the indignation of residents caused that idea to be shelved.

Caledon council voted to back the petition in September, and Regional council put the issue on hold later that month.

"Safety and preservation has become a concern as more and more people from across the province visit the beautiful landscape of the Badlands," Jones said.

"The Liberal government must address the concerns raised by the signatories of the petition," she added. "The government has an obligation to come to the table and help find a reasonable solution that provides both safety to the people of Ontario and preserves the beautiful landscape of the Cheltenham Badlands."