

Letter prepared for Premier

By Bill Rea

Peel Regional councillors have approved the letter they agreed to send to Premier Kathleen Wynne.

Councillors last Thursday were shown the draft of the letter to be sent, protesting the rapid passage of Bill 70. Among other things, the legislation, which quietly received Royal Assent in December, calls for the general election of the Chair of Peel Region, as well as the Chairs in York and Niagara Regions.

The letter requests the government to repeal the parts of the bill that addresses amendments to the Municipal Act.

The letter also pointed out councillors, at their meeting of Jan. 26, "voted virtually unanimously" to call on the Province to "take immediate action" on the matter.

Brampton Mayor Linda Jeffrey, a long-time supporter of the idea of electing the Regional Chair at large, voted against the Jan. 26 motion. Caledon Councillor Johanna Downey was absent from that meeting because she was involved with other municipal business.

"The right to self-determination is a fundamental tenet of democracy, and the collective will of Peel Regional council is that you respect this fact and afford us this right as democratically-elected officials," the letter stated.

Mississauga Councillor Karen Ras had a bit of trouble with the reference to council voting "virtually unanimously" in favour of the Jan. 26 motion.

"It's like 'I'm virtually pregnant,'" she commented, suggesting the letter should just mention the result of the vote.