

Peel dissolution cancelled as Province focuses on Regional efficiencies?

Mayor applauds decision to keep Peel whole

By ZACHARY ROMAN

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Region of Peel will remain whole.

On December 13, Paul Calandra, Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, announced the Province had reversed its decision to dissolve the Region of Peel.

"While we originally thought that the best way to achieve our goals of better services and lower taxes was through dissolution, we've since heard loud and clear from municipal leaders and stakeholders that full dissolution would lead to significant tax hikes and disruption to critical services the people of Peel Region depend on," said Calandra in a statement. "This is something our government will never support."

This summer the Province passed the Hazel McCallion Act, which would have seen Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga become independent municipalities by January 1, 2025. The Ford government said legislation coming in the New Year means this will no longer happen.

According to the Province, the transition board appointed to oversee Peel's dissolution will now have a new mandate to "focus on making local government in Peel Region more efficient and responsive to the needs of taxpayers, including by improving regional services like policing, paramedics and public health."

Caledon Mayor Annette Groves said she's very pleased the Province has recognized the importance of keeping Peel Region together. She said the Region has a long history of providing great service to the residents of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga.

Groves thanked Calandra and Premier Doug Ford for listening to Peel paramedics, police and health care providers, who had raised concerns with dissolution.

"Keeping the Region together and keeping those services together is extremely important," she said, adding that keeping the community safe is paramount.

Groves said Peel staying together is good news for Caledon taxpayers.

"What a great Christmas present for the residents of Caledon? I know that a lot of my residents were very anxious about this decision," said Groves. "This allows them to have more assurance and security knowing that those services that they've come to enjoy? will continue."

At a Queen's Park press conference on Wednesday, Calandra said Ford told him he's "completely uninterested" in seeing tax increases for the people of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga.

Ontario's Leader of the Opposition, Marit Stiles of the NDP, said in the press conference that the chaos surrounding Peel's dissolution stemmed from a complete failure of leadership from Ford and his Conservative government.

"We knew Peel's dissolution was a bad deal from the very beginning," said Stiles. "It should never have been made? Doug Ford and the Conservatives have wasted people's time, their energy and their tax dollars pursuing terrible decisions."

She then accused Ford and outgoing Mississauga Mayor/Ontario Liberal leader Bonnie Crombie of using the people of Peel Region as pawns in a ?bizarre political chess game.?