

Statement from Ontario Liberal candidate for York—Simcoe, Lorelea Carruthers, on the North Gwillimbury Forest:

For the past number of years, I have been a firm advocate in favour of protecting the North Gwillimbury Forest and Wetlands. On Friday, a staff report will go to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, recommending that a development be allowed to proceed on the wetland and forest.

Last year, our Ontario Liberal government blocked a suggestion from the developer to “swap” the development plans for the forest and wetlands in favour of a development on neighbouring prime agricultural lands. Our Ontario Liberal government blocked this proposal as a non-starter, and stood up for the integrity of the Greenbelt. That was the right decision to make to protect the Lake Simcoe watershed.

What is now recommend by the LSCRA staff argues, because the Ontario Liberal government denied a major developer’s plan to build on farmland, they should be able to build on the protected wetlands—right on the shores of Lake Simcoe.

My position on this issue is clear: they should not be allowed to build this development, either on prime farmland or on a provincially significant wetland.

The elected officials on the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority should vote down this proposal.

I refuse to sacrifice either our farmland or wetlands. I said as much in my nomination speech earlier this month, and have been clear that I support protecting the North Gwillimbury Forest since 2014 when I helped host a town hall on this matter and signed a pledge to protect the forest and wetlands that was put out by the North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance.

I hope my Conservative opponent will echo my clear position. We must protect the North Gwillimbury Forest and Wetlands.