



April 3, 2018

The Honourable Bill Mauro
Minister of Municipal Affairs
17th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2E5

Dear Minister Mauro,

RE: request for issuance of Zoning Order to prohibit development on the Paradise Beach-Island Grove Provincially Significant Wetland

On behalf of Ontario Nature, I am writing to request that you issue a Zoning Order, pursuant to s. 47 of the Planning Act, to prohibit development on the Paradise Beach-Island Grove Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) in the Town of Georgina.

Ontario Nature is a charitable conservation organization that protects wild species and wild spaces through conservation, education and public engagement. We represent more than 30,000 individual members and supporters and 150 member groups across Ontario. We have been at the forefront of wetland policy development in the province since the 1970s, and were closely involved in the development of Ontario's 2017 Wetland Conservation Strategy. I currently sit on the Wetland Conservation Advisory Panel, reporting to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

We ask that you issue a Zoning Order to prohibit the development of a 1,073 unit recreational residential retirement community on a property owned by Maple Lake Estates Inc. and located on the Paradise Beach-Island Grove PSW. Such development would contravene section 2.1.4 of the Provincial Policy Statement which strictly prohibits development in significant wetlands in southern Ontario. It would also damage or destroy the habitat of several species at risk, including butternut, monarch butterfly, barn swallow, eastern wood-pewee, wood thrush and snapping turtle. (Western chorus frog, Blanding's turtle and northern map turtle, all species at risk, have also been found in the area and may be using this wetland habitat.)

The Town of Georgina opposes the Maple Lake Estates development on the grounds that it would undermine the environmental sustainability of Georgina and the Lake Simcoe community and would threaten the current and long-term health of Lake Simcoe. The Town Council unanimously passed a resolution to that effect on March 22, 2018 (Resolution No. C-2018-0116).



Nevertheless, the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority approved a permit application on March 23, 2018 allowing the development to proceed, on the grounds that the development had been approved in the 1980s and that the harm could be 'offset.'

It is important to note that the strict prohibition on development of PSWs in the Provincial Policy Statement does not allow for offsetting of harm. This commitment to protecting PSWs is noted and reinforced in Ontario's Wetland Conservation Strategy (pp. 14, 42). Offsetting of PSWs is not on the table.

Ontario's policies and commitments regarding the importance of wetlands and the need to protect them have evolved significantly since the 1980s, based on an enhanced understanding of the many benefits they provide in terms of stormwater retention, climate mitigation, biodiversity conservation and more. We urge you to uphold these policies and commitments by issuing a Zoning Order to prohibit the Maple Lake Estates development on the Paradise Beach-Island Grove PSW.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Bell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Anne Bell
Director of conservation and education

cc. The Honourable Nathalie Des Rosiers, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
John Espinosa, Clerk, Town of Georgina, jespinosa@georgina.ca
Councillor Dave Neeson, Town of Georgina, dneeson@georgina.ca
Jack Gibbons, Chair, North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance, Jack@SaveNGForest.org