

April 22, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney,, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2
mark.carney@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Carney,

I am writing to express my deep concern over Ontario Premier Doug Ford's unilateral announcement that he intends to expand Toronto's Billy Bishop Airport and thereby upend the shared vision for Toronto's Waterfront agreed to by three levels of government.

This shared vision was rooted in the fundamental principle of ensuring a compatible, robust and sustainable balance of land uses. It was the basis for the governments of Canada, Ontario and the City of Toronto committing vast amounts of time, effort and money, successfully, to bring Toronto's once-neglected waterfront back to the people of the city and to visitors in ways that were barely imaginable a generation ago.

As former chair of the Royal Commission on the Future of the Waterfront I can attest first hand that the Premier's proposal would undermine decades of progress the city, province and federal government have made in bringing Toronto's once-derelict waterfront back to life.

The Premier's proposed expansion is a direct threat to this progress. It would undermine the billions of dollars invested in developing Toronto's Waterfront into a world-class neighbourhood.

The benefits to our economy and well-being have been monumental, in terms of resident use, tourism, new housing, business and economic development. Toronto's central waterfront:

- contributes \$13B to GDP annually
- attracts 18M tourists annually
- has leveraged more than \$10.5B in private construction value
- generated more than \$2.7B in tax revenue to governments
- at build-out will have a population of more than 100,000 people (about the size of the City of Peterborough, Ontario).

This effort over several generations, through Waterfront Toronto and other agencies, has transformed a post-industrial wasteland that was largely off limits to the public into an iconic, attractive area for water-borne and land-based activity.

The Waterfront is now a major contributor to Toronto's and the Province's economy and vitality and a major source of jobs. Work to build an even better Waterfront is still underway, which promises to deliver even more benefits over the next two decades, particularly in the Port Lands which have been under development for 25 years.

More specifically, the planned revitalization of Quayside and Ookwemin Minising alone will create 14,000 new homes (including affordable homes), an estimated 100,000 skilled trades jobs and add \$13.2 billion to the Canadian economy.

All of this would be jeopardized by the Premier's arbitrary call for a major expansion of Billy Bishop Airport, which suggests a quintupling of flights.

There would be even more harm to Toronto's Waterfront:

- Noise and pollution would compromise quality of life for waterfront residents and workers.
- Airport traffic would overwhelm the mainland capacity and spill over to adjacent areas.
- Tourism, waterfront attractions and recreational boating would be impacted by constant noise and disruption from the dramatic increase in flights (up to one flight per minute).
- Runway expansions, beyond those required by Transport Canada, would impact the Toronto Islands which are a sacred and significant place to Indigenous Nations and affect ferry service for more than one million annual visitors.
- The new almost 100 acre (40 ha) Biigaasege park east of the airport (including significant new habitat and wetlands) representing a \$1.3B (plus \$975M committed to phase 2) would be directly under the flight path.
- New jet flight paths would reduce the amount of housing proposed in Toronto's Portlands, targeted to be 30 per cent affordable.

Accordingly, I urge that you direct your government to undertake all required federal reviews of any proposed expansion of Billy Bishop Airport, including evaluation under the federal Impact Assessment Act.

To that end, I was heartened to see MP Julie Dzerowicz state that "the federal government has made a firm commitment that there must be meaningful consultations with community groups and key stakeholders before anything changes. That is not optional – it is a requirement."

This would enable costs and benefits to be evaluated properly, and it would provide the opportunity for Toronto residents, Indigenous communities and all stakeholders to make their views known.

I also urge you to commit that you will not follow the Premier's efforts to bypass the application of appropriate review laws, given his intention to identify the airport as a Special Economic Zone.

This can be accomplished by you confirming that the federal government will not use powers it has under Bill C-5, the *Canadian Economy Act, 2025*, that would allow exempting a proposed expansion of Billy Bishop Airport from federal laws and reviews.

The federal government's role is key in reviewing and evaluating any proposals by any partner that would run counter to the shared vision for Toronto's Waterfront that has been embraced with enthusiasm by the business and investment communities and the public. Toronto's Waterfront is too important to our economy, our healthy urban growth and to all generations of Torontonians and Canadians to allow arbitrary moves by a single level of government that would jeopardize the work we have achieved together so far.

Sincerely,

David Crombie

The Honourable David Crombie, P.C.
Former Commissioner
Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront