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McGUINTY GOVERNMENT MOVES TO CONSERVE DUFFINS ROUGE LAND FOR AGRICULTURE

Proposed Legislation Would Ensure Protection Of Agricultural Preserve

TORONTO — The McGuinty government is introducing new legislation that, if passed, would ensure the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve is set aside permanently for agricultural use, Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay announced today.

“All parties signed agreements to permanently protect the agricultural preserve, but recent local actions have threatened it,” said Ramsay. “Protecting our valuable agricultural and conservation lands is important and commitments must be honoured.”

If passed by the Legislature, the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act would reinforce the conditions agreed to in 1999 by the province, the Regional Municipality of Durham and the former Town of Pickering (now the City of Pickering) when land in the preserve was sold by the province. The act would:

- Ensure that all existing conservation easements on the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve are held in perpetuity
- Reinstate easements previously held and released by the City of Pickering.

In addition, proposed amendments to the Conservation Land Act would provide greater certainty about using conservation easements to protect conservation values on land over the long term.

If passed, these legislative changes would support a number of other government initiatives that address the long-term stewardship of our natural heritage, including the Greenbelt Act, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act and the Ontario Heritage Act, as well as the government’s Natural Spaces program and Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy.

“I am pleased we are ensuring that the original conditions of sale put on the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve land by the Ontario Realty Corporation are preserved and strengthened,” said Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal David Caplan.

“The Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve contains high-quality agricultural land and is an integral part of the Greenbelt Plan, which protects greenspace in the Greater Golden Horseshoe,” said Ramsay. “Protecting our prime agricultural land helps to ensure our communities stay strong and healthy for generations to come.”

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