

**From:** [Wilkinson, Jonathan - M.P.](#)  
**Sent:** April 26, 2021 12:37:05 PM  
**To:** [Ministre / Minister \(EC\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Metrolinx Don Valley layby expansion  
**Sensitivity:** Normal  
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-----Original Message-----

From: Patricia Merrilees <Email address removed>  
Sent: April 24, 2021 12:31 PM  
To: Wilkinson, Jonathan - M.P. <Jonathan.Wilkinson@parl.gc.ca>  
Cc: Dabrusin, Julie - M.P. <Julie.Dabrusin@parl.gc.ca>; tabunsp-co@ndp.on.ca;  
councillor\_fletcher@toronto.ca  
Subject: Metrolinx Don Valley layby expansion

To the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson,  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
CC:  
The Honourable Julie Dabrusin,  
Member of Parliament, Toronto-Danforth  
Peter Tabuns  
MPP, Toronto-Danforth  
Paula Fletcher  
City of Toronto Councillor

I am requesting a regional assessment under the Impact Assessment Act for the area of the Don Valley adjoining the Federal ridings of Toronto Danforth, Toronto Centre, University-Rosedale, Spadina-Fort York, Don Valley West and Don Valley East.

We require an Federal Impact Assessment to specifically measure the cumulative effects of six simultaneous infrastructure projects occurring within 5 km of each other in the Don Valley, a unique and fragile urban ecosystem.

The six are:

-The Don Mouth and Portlands revitalization; -Lakeshore East bridge widening (from 3 tracks to six tracks) over the Lower Don; -Don Valley Service Facility; -Don River and Central Waterfront Wet Weather Flow Project (construction from Coxwell Ravine Park downriver to Ashbridges Bay); -Ontario Line Bridge over Lower Don (south of Millwood Bridge); -Ontario Line Bridge over West Don (from Walmsley Brook to Don Mills Road).

A regional assessment is required because while each project will have its individual EA, none are designed to measure the cumulative effects of what happens to the tree canopy, the biodiverse habitat those trees support, wildlife habitat and migration along with runoff and sediment into the river from six ongoing projects.

This does not include the effects of state of good repair operations and maintenance that occur regularly.

In addition, Climate change projects include the City of Toronto's Ravine Strategy, it's Tree Canopy and Waterfront Shoreline Project and the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority's Ravine Erosion Risk Management and Hazard Mitigation Project. All of these projects include Federal funding to some extent such as the \$1.5 Billion provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure Canada through the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund.

Not only is the cumulative impact missing but some components of the projects have provided inaccurate data, misleading forecasts and omitted outcomes.

Metrolinx's Big Move proposes the expansion of diesel locomotive powered regional rail service, resulting in their proposal to build a Maintenance Service Facility and train parking lot in the Don Valley. Access to this facility by road and rail sit within the 100-year flood zone. Metrolinx acknowledges the problems of the area:

"The 2015 GO RER Initial Business Case... identified issues that should be addressed before deciding on a development strategy for the [Richmond Hill] corridor.

Technical challenges include:

- Flooding in the Lower Don River, which affects most of the corridor from Richmond Street to the Millwood Bridge"<sup>1</sup>

Further the climate change benefits of the Big Move, as calculated by Metrolinx, are highly suspect. Of the \$42.2 Billion of total project benefit, reduction in GreenHouse Gases represent a mere 0.78% of the total (\$330 million). However, this \$330 million

forecast is based on shifting 145,000 cars off the road on rails in 2055. The likelihood is that cars in 2055 are electric while many of Metrolinx's trains will continue to be diesel.

Metrolinx also provides stats showing a drop in the average GHG emissions per passenger from 1.85kg to .5kg per trip. While the absolute increase in the amount of GHG emissions generated by Metrolinx is known, the number of riders over the next 35 year is a variable forecast. One only needs to look at Metrolinx's current ridership and their vague assessment of the impact of "work from home" to see the problem with forecasted reductions in average GHG emissions per rider.

In an assessment of Metrolinx's proposal to build, access and operate a permanent industrial Maintenance and Service facility in the environmentally sensitive Don Valley we may find additional negative environmental impacts such as moving commuters from electric vehicles to diesel trains, commitment to running scheduled diesel trains regardless of traffic load and broad impact of converting accessible ravine parkland to low density development for commuters.

My hope is that all levels of government recognize the value of our urban greenspaces and move forward with the The 2021 Federal budget proposals:

"Natural Infrastructure Strategies in Canada."

According to a report by the Greenbelt Foundation, investing in natural areas and reducing reliance on built infrastructure can help

Cities across Canada are taking advantage of this opportunity and are investing in natural infrastructure, see examples below:

The City of Toronto's Ravine Strategy aims to protect, manage, and enhance the ecological services and recreational opportunities provided by an urban ravine network spanning more than 300 kilometers. The strategy focuses on ravine areas with high levels of existing use and where the surrounding neighbourhoods have limited access to public or private greenspace."

A RECOVERY PLAN FOR JOBS, GROWTH, AND RESILIENCE

<https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/pdf/budget-2021-en.pdf>

As a regular walker in Toronto's ravines, I appreciate your attention to this matter in hopes of protecting the Don Valley from the reintroduction of industrial operations into accessible ravine parkland.

Patricia Merrilees

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<Email address removed>

1 Metrolinx GO Expansion Full Business Case, 2018 municipalities save money and mitigate the impacts of climate change.