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Subject: Protect Our Farmland and Farmers: Stop the Secrecy & Stop the Wilmot Land Grab
Date: February 27, 2025 3:20:25 PM

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Dear Mayor Salonen & Councillors:

I am writing to express my profound displeasure regarding the recent confirmation of Toyota's potential involvement in the secretive and highly dubious Wilmot Land Assembly mega-project. While economic growth and industrial job creation might seem appealing at this location, the significant negative impacts on our local farming community and dependent businesses cannot be ignored as they both contribute to local employment. The economic stability of farming families is at risk, as displacement and financial strain could devastate this valued community with noble local historical significance within Wilmot.

The hostile proposed expropriation of prime farmland threatens the livelihoods of many farmers who have cultivated this rare soil for generations. This land is crucial for local food production and the province's vital food supply chain. Irresponsibly transforming rare prime farmland into an industrial mega-site poses severe irreversible risks to local ecosystems and biodiversity, with potential long-term consequences.

The lack of transparency and honest communication from elected bureaucrats has left farmers and residents in the dark about this project's long-term implications, including mental health issues caused by ongoing frustration and uncertainty.

It is deeply troubling when delegations bring their genuine concerns about the Wilmot Land Assembly to Wilmot Township Council, only to be dismissed with the refrain, "as you know this is a regional matter," which undermines the intelligence and voices of your constituents - effectively gaslighting your neighbours.

As the mayor and sole regional Councillor for Wilmot, you have reframed the narrative to inaccurately depict the Region of Waterloo as the sole architect of the Wilmot Land Assembly. This misrepresentation ignores the fact that both you and the Regional Chair have issued joint statements and been identified by provincial MPPs and your US-based land acquisition consultant as collaborators in this misguided project.

For instance, a joint statement issued by the Region of Waterloo and the Township of Wilmot states, "The Region of Waterloo and Wilmot Township are working with the province." Additionally, an email to CTV News mentions, "The Region of Waterloo and Wilmot Township are partnering on land readiness to create shovel-ready sites." Furthermore, CANACRE, the consultant you hired, is on record as stating they are acting for the Region of Waterloo and the Township of Wilmot. You, as Wilmot's Mayor and Chair Redman have been quoted saying, "The Region and Township remain committed to balancing protecting vital agricultural lands with securing significant economic investment." Another statement highlights, "The Region of Waterloo and Wilmot Township are collaborating to prepare land for development, aiming to establish shovel-ready sites."

Since the Ford Government has openly taken responsibility for bankrolling the farmland acquisitions, the community is equally entitled to transparency and honesty from its municipal leadership. This should include recognizing and accepting their collaborative participation in this dubious Wilmot Land Assembly from the beginning.

It is expected that these joint public statements to the media were issued with the full knowledge and agreement of the respective municipal councils involved. If this is not the case, each councillor has a responsibility to their constituents to identify and openly address any inappropriate and unsanctioned strong mayor type of activities.

In light of these concerns, I strongly implore the leaders of the Region of Waterloo and Wilmot Township to reject this unacceptable foreign corporate land grab involving the destruction of 770 acres of Class 1 Prime farmland. First, **declare Wilmot an UNWILLING HOST to this disrespectful and destructive scheme**, which lacks transparency and threatens the well-being of the community you were elected to serve. Secondly, **work with and for constituents to preserve our valuable farmland and support our farming community**, which plays an essential role in feeding us and contributing to Canada's economy, and sovereignty now under threat.

Thank you in advance for your serious and favourable consideration of this submission.

Responses from elected representatives are welcome, while the unelected executive officer of Council need not respond.

(I have copied the clerks in the respective government bodies and request that this document be published in the official public record as correspondence.)

Regards,
Mike Rice

