



For Immediate Release

May 10, 2016

## **Environmentalists and Urbanists Applaud Provincial Plan to add Toronto Ravines to the Greenbelt**

Toronto: Environmentalists and urbanists are very pleased with the just announced plan by the Province to add public ravine lands along the Don and Humber Rivers and Etobicoke Creek to the Greenbelt, the 1.8 million acres of protected agricultural lands, rivers, lakes, trails, ski hills, historical cultural sites, and world-renowned forests and parks surrounding Toronto.

“It’s great that the Wynne Government is listening to the public, to experts and to Toronto City Council who have supported growing the Greenbelt into Toronto’s ravines,” said Franz Hartmann, Executive Director of the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA). “Our ravines are part of watersheds that connect Lake Ontario to their headwaters in the Greenbelt. Adding the ravines to the Greenbelt ensures all lands of these vital watersheds are equally protected.”

“The extension of the Greenbelt into urban river valleys, including those in the intensely developed areas of Toronto, is an important acknowledgement of our interdependence with nature,” said Ken Greenberg, renowned urban designer and Principal of Greenberg Consultants Inc.. “Expanding the Greenbelt will ensure these natural corridors are permanently protected for a broad range of purposes connecting urban residents seamlessly to the rural landscapes of the Greenbelt.”

TEA has been calling on the Province to add ravine lands along the Don River, Humber River and Etobicoke Creek to the Greenbelt since 2009. In 2010 and 2014 City Council passed motions calling for these lands to be added to the Greenbelt. As well, public support is high: over 4,000 Torontonians have signed letters calling for Greenbelt expansion into Toronto’s ravines.

While Hartmann applauded the Wynne Government’s Greenbelt plans, he was disappointed that the government did not shut the door on urban sprawl outside of Toronto. “The announcement today still allows for future urban sprawl by not freezing existing urban boundaries,” said Hartmann. “We urge the Province to change this and put an end to bad, expensive and environmentally destructive development.”

-30-

For more information, contact: Franz Hartmann, Toronto Environmental Alliance (cell: 416-606-8881)