

Hello Premier Ford.

This summer, I expect to once again smell the fumes of fires burning in north Ontario, and to experience extreme storms and flooding.

Toronto, along with many other Ontario cities, has spent the last decade spending tens of millions of dollars on retrofitting buildings to help offset the effects of climate change.

There have been municipal loans and rebates available to homeowners and businesses who undertake their own retrofits. Our own residents' association has started up a local retrofit initiative to try to move people off fossil fuels. During the last 16 years, over 4000 new Toronto buildings have adhered to Toronto's Green Standards requirements, which include permeable coverings to reduce the likelihood of flooding during our ever more extreme stormy weather, in addition to other green features.

While numerous cities across Ontario have implemented standards which promote green roofs, urban forest protections, stormwater management, renewable energy systems and green spaces, Ontario has not updated its own building code since 2017 and does not include any reference to green standards.

Bill 98 will take more of the onus off developers to consider the climate impact of their projects, with the result that taxpayers will bear the brunt of the costs, while the developers reap the profits of their investments.

This doesn't apply to Toronto only, but includes municipalities across the province, such as Whitby, Ajax and Pickering. Durham Region as a whole has developed a green set of initiatives for new builds aiming for net-zero emissions by 2030.

Cities don't have an easy time designing standards which will not act as a deterrent to developers. In general, these standards are softened with financial incentives, such as tax rebates. The overall result has been a set of standards which are not particularly onerous and an already considerable amount of taxpayer money being returned to developers in the form of rebates. In Toronto, for example, almost \$120 million has been refunded.

Bill 98 shifts the cost of net-zero emission planning onto taxpayers in another way. It is significantly more expensive to retrofit an existing building than it is to build green from the outset. If green standards are not incorporated into the original building, the taxpayer is left footing a bill that can cost up to \$200,000/unit, according to a 2023 study by United Way Greater Toronto.

We now live with the reality of an impending climate disaster. Flood insurance premiums in Ontario have increased by 26% in the last two years. It should be common sense that new buildings use permeable surfaces, and clean technology. British Columbia has just released its Energy Step Code, which sets province wide energy efficiency requirements for new buildings, precisely while Ontario eliminates them.

Premier Ford, you have been lauded for standing up to President Trump. Please use that same courage to prevent climate catastrophe by making some essential and common sense requirements of developers.

Thank you.