

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Tuesday, March 29, 2022

**“Our governments need to be able to deal with the housing crisis without making the climate crisis worse.”**

Concerned citizens are worried about two back-to-back Provincial announcements regarding housing developments. Late last week the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing John Lohr announced the intention to fast-track nine proposed housing developments in the Halifax Regional Municipality. On Monday March 28 an additional announcement was made that the Province would invest in one of the proposed developments, at the Southdale Future Growth Node in Dartmouth.

The Southdale Future Growth Node developments will add up to 1200 housing units in an ecologically sensitive area. The majority of the units are not designated as affordable, but the developers are using the word “attainable” to make them sound tempting to politicians. The developments will replace the protective forest belt around the Eisner Cove Wetland, and will add an infilled road across the wetland, cutting it in two.

A local citizens’ group, the Protect Our Southdale Wetland Society, has been concerned about these developments since they were first announced. This group has been working to raise the awareness of residents, city council and provincial government about the need to protect the wetland and the risks posed by the development plans.

“There are so many things wrong with this plan from an environmental point of view. Just to name a few: removal of the protective forest that keeps the wetland vital and healthy; pollutant runoff into the wetland from construction activity and dense habitation; and inadequate planning for stormwater runoff. The analysis documents submitted by Clayton Developments have failed to properly take into account these aspects. Individually each of these items presents significant risk to the wetland. Taken together, they spell disaster. In addition, there are important local considerations that appear to be not thought through, such as traffic into and out of the area and impact to schools.” – *Bill Zebedee, Protect Our Southdale Wetland Society*. [www.protecteisnerwetland.ca](http://www.protecteisnerwetland.ca)

“Wetlands store more carbon than any other type of landscape, and they are absolutely critical for preventing and mitigating the effects of climate change, preserving biodiversity, minimising flood risk, and purifying drinking water supplies. The peat in the Eisner Cove Wetland stores an enormous amount of carbon. Damaging the wetland will cause it to release stored carbon in the form of greenhouse gases. To plan a development without understanding the implications of its ecological function would be a danger to HRM’s climate targets and could cause this carbon storehouse to become a Carbon-Emitting Chimney. At a time when cities the world over are scrambling to reintroduce lost wetlands, HRM cannot afford to destroy this essential carbon storehouse.” – *Lil MacPherson, climate activist and founder of The Wooden Monkey*.

Our governments need to be able to deal with the housing crisis without making the climate crisis worse. There are many appropriate brownfield locations in HRM where housing can be developed without these severe environmental impacts. Choosing to fast-track and invest in the proposals for the lands around the Eisner Cove Wetland is ill-advised, and future generations will pay the price. The Protect Our Southdale Wetland Society is calling for a meeting with Minister Lohr, as well as the Minister of the Environment Tim Halman, to present their concerns.

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