



Dear Friend,

Toronto City Council is making a decision at its May 21-23 meeting that could cost you, personally, tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars!

Council will decide between two proposals.

The first proposal, from the Toronto Port Authority, is for a massive expansion of the Toronto Island Airport. If this proposal is approved, the new airport could devastate the value of your home, destroy the quality of life in your neighborhood, and degrade our environment.

Not surprisingly, the self-serving report that the Toronto Port Authority is using to back its proposal — the 260 page *Toronto City Centre Airport General Aviation & Airport Feasibility Study* — while extolling the economic virtues of airport expansion, fails to make any mention of the economic benefits of closing the airport and putting the site to better uses, nor does it talk about the direct financial impact on the value of homes like yours.

URGENT! A new airline company, with over a half a billion dollars to spend, has already asked the City of Toronto, the Toronto Port Authority, and the federal government for the green light to expand the Toronto Island Airport.

The second proposal, tabled by Councillor Jack Layton, is to close the airport and convert the “site to clean, green, environmentally friendly uses compatible with the principles contained in the City’s draft waterfront plan.”

If you join our “Island Airport NO!” campaign, we can get Layton’s proposal passed, and that will likely increase the value of your home, certainly increase the quality of life in your neighborhood, and help reduce Toronto's air pollution.

We can stop Council expanding the airport, even make them close it — but we need your help. In fact, success depends on your help.

ENVIRONMENT VOTERS

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By joining Environment Voters' "**Island Airport NO!**" campaign, you'll not only help protect the value of your home, but also help make Toronto's waterfront — your front yard — the world class urban gem it can become with innovative, environmentally responsible development.

Environment Voters is not the only group fighting to close the airport. Because the future of the airport will have such a profound — and potentially devastating — impact on you personally, I urge you to support as many groups as you can. They're all doing vital work.

Environment Voters plays a much different role in issues like this than other groups. We are the "political muscle" that can make the difference between winning and losing.

So, let's talk politics. Because it's politics — not what's right, fair, or just — that is going to decide the future of the airport, and the real estate value of your home.

I'm stating the obvious when I say that the fate of the airport will be decided by politicians — your elected councillors and the mayor.

What might not be so obvious is that, for sitting politicians, how they vote on an issue is rarely about doing the right thing. If it was, the Toronto Island Airport would have been closed years ago and Toronto's waterfront from Etobicoke to Scarborough would be the envy of cities around the world.

For politicians, deciding public policy is mostly about getting elected and re-elected. This isn't because politicians are bad people. Quite the opposite. Most politicians want the same things for their community and the environment that you and I want.

But unlike you and me, politicians have to get elected. And in our system, getting elected usually means — like it or not — pandering to politically powerful industries and rapacious special interests: in other words, the very people who want to profit — at your expense — by expanding the Toronto Island Airport.

These people are politically powerful not because they do good things for our city, but because they can influence votes and put money in the campaign war chests of politicians and political parties.

For example, the new airline company that wants to use the Toronto Island Airport, plans to use Bombardier aircraft. Bombardier is one of the federal Liberal Party's largest contributors — \$100,503 in 2000.

The new airline company is also dangling money in front of the Toronto Port Authority and the City of Toronto by offering "revenue sharing" that they say will generate "significant revenue for both the City and the [Toronto Port Authority.]"

Now you know the real politics behind a politician's decision-making. So, let's talk about solutions. Let's talk about winning. Let's talk about protecting the value of your home and Toronto's waterfront environment, and how you can help.

First, you must fully appreciate this: the people planning to expand the Toronto Island Airport are very smart politically, and very well-funded. We can expect them to use their resources to appeal to the personal, political best interests of key City Councillors. They've already got some of Toronto's federal and provincial politicians to support their scheme.

Environment Voters' "**Island Airport NO!**" campaign can effectively counter that pressure, and turn it on its head.

If you'll help us, if you'll join with us — working together, we can make it so that a councillor's vote to expand the airport would be the worst political career decision they ever made, and a vote to close the airport the best one.

Environment Voters holds politicians personally accountable for their decisions when it matters most — at elections. We campaign at the constituency level. We help politicians with good environmental protection records get re-elected. And, we campaign to defeat politicians and political parties who harm the environment.

As one politician said, "Environment Voters is the only environmental group using the ballot box."

Contributions from you to Environment Voters' "**Island Airport NO!**" campaign will be used in every municipal election until the airport is closed. We'll use your donations to support politicians who vote to close the airport, and to defeat those who vote to keep it open.

An airport isn't truly closed until it's been replaced by something else — a park, an opera house, a recreational area, a wildlife refuge.

For example, Chicago actually closed the airport on its waterfront — Meigs Field — in 1996 “to return lakefront property to uses that can be enjoyed by all Chicago residents.” But the city was forced to re-open it a year later because of aggressive lobbying at the state level by powerful aviation special interests. Now, the residents of Chicago could be denied the use of this part of their waterfront for another 24 years!

Closing an airport takes unrelenting determination, constant vigilance and long-term commitment. Please help us protect the interests of people like you — the people who will be most affected. And, for the sake of all Torontonians, help us make the waterfront at your front door a jewel of urban planning.

Environment Voters’ “**Island Airport NO!**” campaign must continue until the airport land is converted to other uses. A decision by Toronto City Council to close the airport would only be the beginning of the fight. Not a victory.

We need you to support our “**Island Airport NO!**” campaign until the Toronto Island Airport is not only closed, but also converted to other uses. And, all of us have to steel ourselves to the fact that final closure might take some time.

Please, make a generous contribution today. We’ll use your donation to punish those politicians who want an airport in your front yard, and reward those who want to turn Toronto’s waterfront into something magnificent.

A donation to the Environment Voters’ “**Island Airport NO!**” campaign will likely be the best investment you could ever make to insure the long-term value of your home and the quality of life in your neighborhood.

While any donation you make will be greatly appreciated and used well, the best way to support the kind of political campaigns that Environment Voters runs is to become a monthly giver. Regular, predictable monthly contributions from you — either through automatic withdrawal from your bank account or by way of credit card — allows us to plan the most effective use of your contributions.

Sincerely,

Liz White
Founding Director