



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Citizens Coalition of Greater Fort Erie, ccgforerie@gmail.com

April 4, 2011

Fort Erie Speedway Fight Attracts National Attention from Environmental Watchdogs

Fort Erie, ON - As the Citizens Coalition of Greater Fort Erie prepares for its David vs. Goliath speedway fight before the Ontario Municipal Board, several powerful environmental and conservation groups have aligned themselves with CCGFE in a show of support; including the David Suzuki Foundation, Ontario Nature and the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society.

The **David Suzuki Foundation** has been addressing the phenomenon of what is termed 'urban sprawl' for almost ten years, with a recent focus on the loss of natural spaces in Southern Ontario. "Urban sprawl doesn't pay," explains Dr. David Suzuki, the award-winning scientist, environmentalist and broadcaster. "Along with negative conservation and quality of life issues attached to the proposed development, this type of expansion across agricultural lands will also result in huge costs due to the infrastructure, as well as ongoing costs associated with the environmental and public health impacts."

The decision of Municipal and Regional Governments to override the Official Policy and create a 'special policy area' to allow the speedway to build on the 821 acres they have ear-marked in Fort Erie, paves the way for urban sprawl across agricultural lands, protected wetlands, creeks and forest areas.

Likewise, CCGFE has had several communications with Ontario Nature, an agency charged with protecting the wildlife and biodiversity of the province; who is currently reviewing the impacts of the proposed development and will be closely following the OMB proceedings.

The **Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society (PALS)** is yet another prominent conservation group that is ever-watchful against the threat of urban sprawl in their efforts to protect the agricultural industry and natural heritage areas of Niagara. PALS will also be presenting their case against the speedway development before the OMB as a co-appellant in the proceedings.

Coincidentally, the **Carolinian Canada Coalition** has just published the Conservation Action Plan for Niagara, which notes that the Niagara River corridor includes some of the most biologically diverse natural areas in the Golden Horseshoe; and it is interesting to note that several of the 11 goals outlined in the Niagara CAP would be compromised should the speedway project be allowed to move forward.

"It is rare that a single issue can attract the attention and support of so many watchdog agencies," said Sandy Vant, President of CCGFE, "which certainly serves to bolster our commitment to fight the environmental nightmare that a speedway in this location represents."

The OMB prehearing was originally scheduled to take place on April 8th. However, late last week CCGFE received a notification from the proponent's lawyer requesting that court proceedings be delayed due to the fact that their client still had not completed the necessary environmental and health studies that must be provided to the OMB and all appellants. In the spirit of cooperation and transparency, CCGFE agreed to allow the delay. The purpose of the prehearing is to identify all the parties in the case and establish a format for the actual hearing. It is open to the public and CCGFE encourages all those who stand in opposition to the speedway development to attend. Also, for more information on this issue, concerned citizens are urged to visit the CCGFE website at www.ccgfe.org.

Incorporated in 2010, CCGFE is a grassroots community group whose primary objective is to support responsible development that will enhance and protect the cultural and ecological assets of Greater Fort Erie and Regional Niagara.