



COPE News:

Mid-Peninsula Highway

Citizens Opposed to Paving the Escarpment (COPE) is a group of people who have come together to fight further unnecessary development of the Niagara Escarpment. The Mid-Peninsula Highway (MPH), if built, will slash a path through our lands from Fort Erie to Burlington, permanently damaging the Niagara Escarpment and Peninsula while doing irreversible damage to the environment. The Niagara Escarpment has been designated as a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations. We believe that it should be cared for in a manner befitting this honour.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation is currently in the preliminary stages of the environmental assessment phase of this project. The planned highway is over 130 kilometers long, cutting through uncountable farms, houses, businesses, wetlands, streams and forests. In the Burlington area, the road is slated to bisect the Escarpment, through valuable green space that the City of Burlington has preserved since its inception.

Recent News:

COPE organized a demonstration at an MTO meeting on the highway on Feb. 4, at which hundreds of people donned symbolic 'gas masks' to protest the smell arising from the MTO/MPH planning procedure, and to demonstrate the effects of bad air quality. Media coverage was widespread. See the photo on the website.

The Provincial government announced on Feb. 1st, 2003 that four route options would be carried forward into the Environmental Assessment Process. They have eliminated any other options involving transit, improvements to existing roads, rail freight enhancements, incentives for car pooling, etc.

City of Hamilton officials have described the widening of the 403 Escarpment cut necessary for route G as "impossible." Burlington Mayor Rob MacIsaac has come out strongly against the route C alternative. Milton's Mayor has expressed misgivings about option F, the 401 option. Citizens and politicians in Flamborough, Hamilton and Waterdown have decried route H.

A number of groups and Municipalities have now formally requested that the Ministry slow the MPH process down; they've stated that they are not being given sufficient time to analyze and respond to the hundreds of pages of documents that MTO keeps releasing. These requests have thus far not been honoured.

COPE, the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment, and the City of Burlington will participate in a public meeting on the MPH Feb. 25th, at the Burlington Convention Centre, 1120 Burloak Dr. (N of QEW) at 7 pm.

The Niagara Escarpment Commission has noted in a recent letter that the MTO appears to be failing to adhere to the conditions under which the highway planning process was conditionally approved by the NEC in the summer of 2002.

COPE Actions and Activities:

Our website is updated daily and now includes links to recent news coverage and events and actions involving COPE. Check out the website at www.stophighway.com. Check the photo gallery and the 'Top Ten' list.

Letter-Writing Campaign:

It is time to shift our focus away from MTO and toward their political masters: Please write or email Premier Eves, Transport Minister Sterling, Environment Minister Stockwell, and your local MPP to express your opinion on the MPH. Samples of letters to politicians and their address and email information may be found at www.stophighway.com



This map shows the four route locations left 'on the table' as of Feb. 1, 2003

Additional Mid-Peninsula Highway Facts:

- There are other, more responsible and cheaper alternatives to increase capacity in Niagara -- the MTO has admitted that it would be more cost-efficient to add lanes to QEW Niagara and other roads and that this would solve the congestion problems they foresee. MTO has admitted that this option would save at least \$500 million but (as they stated at a public meeting) was dismissed because it did not allow the MTO to undertake the project with a 'private partner.' Other less environmentally-harmful options were also dismissed because they were by nature difficult to undertake with a 'private partner.'
- The highway would be constructed over mostly rural and wild areas and severely affect hundreds of species of wildlife and plant life, through habit destruction and reduced air and water quality. Highway runoff has been shown to be among the most toxic substances affecting streams and wetlands.

Membership Information:

The efforts to stop the highway may be long term. Your commitment and energy can help to stop construction of the highway. You can join COPE through the website or by writing to: COPE, PO Box 40548, Upper Brant Postal Outlet, Burlington, Ont., L7P 4W1.

COPE: Web: www.stophighway.com

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