



COPE News

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.

Recent Happenings:

The latest round of PIC Meetings produced the first grudging and tacit admissions from MTO that **the highway will be a toll road like the 407** (see the Toll Bulletin on the website: www.cope-nomph.org).

Burlington Mayor Rob MacIsaac has come out strongly against the highway (see the Hamilton Spectator piece from Oct. 11 on the website).

The Six Nations Community has advised MTO that they have numerous concerns about lands that will be affected by the MPH. Those concerns include ancient burial grounds, land claims, hunting and fishing rights, etc. They have also requested additional meetings with both MTO and COPE.

The Federal Government in its Throne Speech announced several initiatives and priorities that are completely opposite to Ontario's current transportation policies. The Federal Transportation Department wants to move truck traffic off highways and on to 'intermodal' freight lines.

In response to pressure from COPE and other groups and individuals, MTO has put several minor variations to the roadway corridor that they had previously dismissed 'back on the table.' This represents a small shift, but they unfortunately still seem wedded to some version of the MPH. They have been given detailed input on alternatives such as rail, public transit improvements, improvements to existing roadways, more strategic and efficient use of existing corridors, etc. They have ignored all of this input.

Recent COPE Activities:

Our website is updated daily and now includes links to recent news coverage. We encourage you to take a look at www.cope-nomph.org. Some COPE activities from recent days include providing testimony to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, making a presentation to Hamilton City Council, and presenting a press conference/speaking engagement with renowned wildlife artist and naturalist Robert Bateman. COPE was also represented at the MPH Stakeholder workshops in Hamilton and Burlington and we continue to lobby public and political opinion through the media. Details of all of these activities are available on the website.

Letter-Writing Campaign:

It is vitally important that we kick our letter-writing campaign into high gear! It is time to shift our focus away from MTO and toward their political masters: Premier Eves, Transport Minister Sterling, and your local MPP. Please take the time to write, fax or email them your thoughts on the construction of the MPH. Once the Provincial Representatives have been contacted, consider also cc'ing Federal MPs and local Councillors and Representatives – they do not have direct power over MTO but may help in the fight nonetheless. Samples of letters to politicians and address and email information may be found at www.cope-nomph.org