



**Submission to the Select Committee on
Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy**

Re: Bill 23 – More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022

By the

Canadian Health Association for Sustainability and Equity (CHASE)

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Who are We?

This submission is being offered by the **Canadian Health Association for Sustainability and Equity (CHASE)**.

CHASE is a non-profit organization, directed and run by public health professionals who have extensive expertise and experience on environmental health and built environment issues. CHASE is dedicated to improving population health, protecting the planet, and reducing health inequities.

Bill 23 will increase Climate Emissions in Ontario

By encouraging **suburban sprawl**, Bill 23 will increase our reliance on cars, make it difficult to provide residents with efficient and affordable public transit, and discourage active modes of travel such as walking and cycling. This will, in turn, increase GHG emissions from the transportation sector in Ontario; a sector which is already responsible for 32% of emissions in this province.ⁱ

By undermining **green building standards** developed by local municipalities in Ontario, Bill 23 will eliminate opportunities to reduce GHG emissions from all future buildings in this province. This is a critical concern given that commercial and residential buildings in Ontario are already responsible for 25% of the province's **GHG** emissions.ⁱⁱ

Climate Change Threatens the Livability of the Planet

Climate change threatens the livability of the planet. The 2022 report by the **UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** concluded that the “the cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health”; by delaying cuts in GHG emissions, “we will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.”ⁱⁱⁱ

In 2022, with **only 1.15°C of global warming**,^{iv} countries around the world have reported deep droughts, shrinking rivers, severe floods, deepening famine, intense hurricanes, and intense wildfires, all amplified by

rising temperatures. The 200 scientists who produced the IPCC report have concluded that we can expect a 5-fold increase in extreme climate events if we allow global warming to reach 2°C; something we are currently on track to do.^v

Climate Change is Already Harming People in Canada

We, in Canada, are not immune to the health risks presented by climate change. **Hurricanes, tornados, floods, and storms**, that have become more frequent and intense with global warming, are leaving millions of people in Canada without power, cutting them off from clean food and water, damaging or destroying their homes, disrupting their lives, and threatening their financial security. Canada's Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that these events **lowered Canada's GDP by 0.8% or \$20-25Billion in 2021** by reducing outputs from farms hit by droughts, increasing energy bills for residents coping with hotter summers, and causing lost-time from work due to extreme weather, power outages, and damaged infrastructure.^{vi}

Increasing temperatures experienced across the country have **increased heat-related deaths**. Estimates indicate that 2,700 people per year in Canada now die prematurely because of extreme heat. In fact, over 700 people lost their lives in a single week to the "heat dome" that hit BC in 2021. Older people, very young children, those who live on low incomes, and those who live in neighbourhoods with few trees and little vegetation are at greatest risk.^{vii}

Air pollution from wildfires, that have become bigger and more intense in recent years in response to higher temperatures and longer droughts, are now causing 650 to 2500 early deaths each year. Global warming is also amplifying **food and water insecurities** for people in Northern Canada, particularly for Indigenous People who live close to the land, by melting permafrost, increasing sea levels, and changing the range of plants and animals.^{viii}

Ontario's Contribution to Climate Change Matters

Canada had been one of the top 10 emitters of climate pollution for decades.^x That means that Canada, along with other heavy emitters, have caused the global warming that is now impacting billions of people around the world. As the second highest emitting province in one of the top 10 emitting countries, Ontario's actions on climate change matter; to Ontario residents, to the people of Canada, and to the global community.

Ontario made considerable progress to lower our climate emissions over the last 20 years by phasing out coal-fired power plants, investing in renewable energies and energy efficiency, and establishing land use planning policies that discourage suburban sprawl and protect greenspace. However, decisions made in recent years are reversing that trend at a time when it is essential, for the stability of the climate and the livability of the planet, for all jurisdictions steeply cut their emissions. **Bill 23 would be another step in the wrong direction for Ontario.**

Bill 23 will harm the Health of Ontario Residents.

By encouraging **suburban sprawl** and our reliance on vehicles, Bill 23 will increase air pollution, traffic congestion, and vehicle-related injuries and deaths in Ontario, while decreasing levels of physical activity, social equity, and mental health.

Hundreds of studies have been conducted on the health impacts associated with the design of communities and transportation systems. The evidence indicates that people walk more, cycle more, use transit more, and drive less, when they live in more compact neighbourhoods that have a mix of amenities and transit stops nearby, with safe infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. It also demonstrates these characteristics translate into lower levels of obesity, chronic diseases, early, deaths, and decreased healthcare costs.^x With **physical inactivity producing \$2.6 billion per year** in health-related costs in Ontario^{xi}, public health agencies have been working for years to discourage suburban sprawl and create communities and transportation systems that encourage walking, cycling and transit use.^{xii}

By increasing suburban sprawl, Bill 23 will allow levels of air pollution in Ontario to increase. At present, millions of residents in Ontario are exposed to harmful levels of **traffic-related air pollution** (TRAP). Emitted from vehicle tires, brakes and tailpipes, TRAP is toxic pollution found in high concentrations along high volume traffic corridors such as the 401 and the QEW. It causes childhood asthma, cardiovascular disease, premature deaths, lung cancer, childhood leukemia, and possibly breast cancer. Health Canada estimates that TRAP is responsible for **over 1,200 premature deaths and \$9.5 billion in health-related impacts**, each year, for Canada as a whole. Many of those health impacts are borne by the residents of Ontario who live in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area that experiences heavy traffic volumes.^{xiii}

Walkable, bike-able, and transit-supportive communities, on the other hand, can reduce air pollution, foster physical activity, and provide affordable access to jobs, essential services, and recreational opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and income by providing efficient transit service. These communities encourage social equity and social cohesion, while preserving farmland and greenspace. And they reduce climate emissions that threaten the stability of planetary ecosystems upon which we are dependent.^{xiv}

By undermining **green building standards** developed by local municipalities in Ontario, Bill 23 will be limiting opportunities to increase the energy efficiency, sustainability, and climate-resiliency of new buildings. These are features that can reduce costs for residents and decrease energy poverty in the province, while also reducing GHG emissions from Ontario's building sector for many years into the future. These standards can also improve population health and reduce health inequities when directed at affordable housing or housing for low-income populations, by improving indoor air quality and protecting occupants from dangerous extremes in temperature.^{xv}

By whittling away at the **Greenbelt and lands held by conservation authorities**, Bill 23 is removing lands that are essential to the health and well-being of Ontario Residents, while also limiting our ability to protect habitats and corridors that are necessary to preserve biodiversity. A growing body of literature demonstrates that the presence of, and access to, greenspace can reduce the risk of several chronic diseases and associated symptoms,

including anxiety, obesity, and cardiovascular disease, while also protecting residents from flooding, improving air quality, and cooling our communities.^{xvi}

Recommendations

We are asking this Select Committee to:

- **oppose Bill 23**
- **protect, strengthen, and invest in the Greenbelt and our conservation authorities**
- **cultivate and foster the development of walkable, bike-able, and transit-supportive communities**
- **support, and build upon, local green building standards**
- **stand up for the health of Ontario residents and the future of our children.**

ⁱ Canada. 2022. Provincial and Territorial Energy Profiles – Ontario. <https://www.cer-rec.gc.ca/en/data-analysis/energy-markets/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles-ontario.html>

ⁱⁱ Canada. 2022. Provincial and Territorial Energy Profiles – Ontario. <https://www.cer-rec.gc.ca/en/data-analysis/energy-markets/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles-ontario.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Borenstein, Seth. 2022. Landmark UN climate change report: ‘Parts of the planet will become uninhabitable’. *Associated Press*, Feb 28

^{iv} World Meteorological Organization. 2022. Eight warmest years on record witness upsurge in climate change impacts. Media Release. Nov 6.

^v Borenstein, Seth. 2022. Landmark UN climate change report: ‘Parts of the planet will become uninhabitable’. *Associated Press*, Feb 28

^{vi} Robson, Mia. 2022. Canada’s economy took \$20-billion hit from climate change last year, PBO says. *National Observer*. Nov 8th.

^{vii} Health Canada. 2022. Health of Canadians in a Changing Climate - Advancing our Knowledge for Action.

^{viii} Health Canada. 2022. Health of Canadians in a Changing Climate - Advancing our Knowledge for Action.

^{ix} Canada. 2022. Global greenhouse gas emissions. Aug 25.

^x Public Health Ontario. 2019. The Burden of Chronic Diseases in Ontario Key Estimates to Support Efforts in Prevention July 2019

^{xi} Howell N & Booth G. 2002. The Weight of Place: Built Environment Correlates of Obesity and Diabetes. *Endocrine Reviews*, February.

bnac005, <https://doi.org/10.1210/edrev/bnac005>

^{xii} Perrotta, Kim. 2011. Public Health and Land Use Planning: How 10 Public Health Units are Working to Create Healthy and Sustainable Communities.

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^{xiii} Canada. 2022. Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-indicators/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions.html>

^{xiv} Howell N & Booth G. 2002. The Weight of Place: Built Environment Correlates of Obesity and Diabetes. *Endocrine Reviews*, February.

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^{xv} Public Health Ontario. 2019. The Burden of Chronic Diseases in Ontario Key Estimates to Support Efforts in Prevention July 2019

^{xvi} Perrotta, Kim. 2011. Public Health and Land Use Planning: How 10 Public Health Units are Working to Create Healthy and Sustainable Communities.

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^{xvii} Health Canada. 2022. Health Impacts of Traffic-Related Air Pollution in Canada; Health Canada 2020 Traffic-related Air Pollution: Asthma, Allergies and Lung Function. June

^{xviii} Daniel, Kristie & Perrotta, Kim. 2017. Prescribing Active Travel for Healthy People and a Healthy Planet. Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE).

[https://chasecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2.Report - Prescribing Active Travel for Healthy People and a Healthy Planet - A Toolkit for Health Professionals-new.pdf](https://chasecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2.Report_-_Prescribing_Active_Travel_for_Healthy_People_and_a_Healthy_Planet_-_A_Toolkit_for_Health_Professionals-new.pdf)

^{xix} Chatterjee Souran & Urge-Vorsatz Diana. 2021. Measuring the productivity impacts of energy-efficiency: The case of high-efficiency buildings. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. Volume 318.

^{xx} Kingsley, Marianne & EcoHealth Ontario. 2019. Commentary Climate change, health and green space co-benefits Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention in Canada -Research, Policy, and Practice. April