

The Honourable Bob Chiarelli, M.L.A.  
Minister of Infrastructure  
Government of Ontario  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor, 900 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2E1

September 28, 2017

**Re: Minister Amarjeet Sohi's July 6<sup>th</sup> letter regarding the 'Investing in Canada Plan'**

Dear Minister,

The Green Infrastructure Ontario Coalition (GIO) is an alliance of organizations from many different sectors across the province that have a common vision of a healthy, green Ontario where the economic, social, environmental and health benefits of green infrastructure are fully realized. The term "green infrastructure" now in use in Ontario was originally coined by GIO and was formalized in the Provincial Policy Statement under the Ontario *Planning Act*, as follows:

Natural and human-made elements that provide ecological and hydrological functions and processes. Green infrastructure can include components such as natural heritage features and systems, parklands, stormwater management systems, street trees, urban forests, natural channels, permeable surfaces, and green roofs.

While the benefits of green infrastructure to economic vitality, community wellbeing, and public health are now becoming understood and promoted across Ontario, green infrastructure lacks sustained funding and policy support for both implementation and maintenance. However, as you are aware, the Government of Canada's recently announced Investing in Canada Plan included support of \$9.2 billion provided to provinces and territories for green infrastructure over the next 11 years through bilateral agreements, with \$2.8 billion allocated to green infrastructure for Ontario. While the Government of Canada's definition of green infrastructure is broader than the one above, they have defined a subcategory called "natural infrastructure" that aligns with the GIO and Government of Ontario definition of green infrastructure. Two of the three green infrastructure funding areas in the Investing in Canada Plan specifically mention natural infrastructure:

- Adaptation, Resilience, Disaster Mitigation investments that will support community resilience, such as constructed infrastructure (e.g. dykes, winter ice roads replacement) and **natural infrastructure** (e.g. natural shorelines and wetlands) projects that will result in increased infrastructure capacity to withstand and adapt to climate change impacts, and climate-related disaster mitigation;
- Environmental Quality investments, such as infrastructure projects that will result in increased capacity to treat and manage water and wastewater, and capacity to reduce or remediate soil and air pollutants. Funding could include investments in **natural infrastructure**, as well as upgrades to water, wastewater infrastructure, etc.

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This is an exciting new funding area that brings with it many prospects for addressing climate change as well as improving the health and vitality of Ontario's communities and landscapes, but green infrastructure is also a complex field where best practices and the supporting science are constantly evolving. With 40 member organizations with expertise in all aspects of green infrastructure design, implementation, and operations, and 8 years of experience in developing awareness and supporting policy development in Ontario, the GIO network can assist you and the Ministry of Infrastructure in navigating this important emerging opportunity.

To this end, the Green Infrastructure Ontario Coalition would like to extend our collective knowledge and support to help optimize the upcoming investments in Ontario's green infrastructure. I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss how GIO can provide value and support to your efforts.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Martin-Downs".

Deborah Martin-Downs  
CAO, Credit Valley Conservation and Chair, Green Infrastructure Ontario Coalition