

*Ottawa*

Room 349, Confederation Building  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6  
Tel.: 613-996-1119  
Fax: 613-996-0850



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Ottawa*

Pièce 349, Édifice de la Confédération  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0A6  
Tél. : 613-996-1119  
Télééc. : 613-996-0850

*Constituency*

9711 Fourth Street Suite 1  
Sidney, British Columbia V8L 2Y8  
Tel.: 250-657-2000  
Fax: 250-657-2004

*Elizabeth May*  
Member of Parliament / Député(e)  
Saanich — Gulf Islands

*Circonscription*

9711, rue Fourth suite 1  
Sidney (Colombie-Britannique) V8L 2Y8  
Tél. : 250-657-2000  
Télééc. : 250-657-2004

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A A06

February 4, 2022

Dear Minister Guilbeault,

I am writing to you in connection with the sudden decision by a group of Ottawa politicians to reject the National Capital Commission's (NCC) recommendation that a brownfield site, (Tunney's Pasture site), be used for the new Ottawa hospital in the city centre.

The decision was made in private, without any public or city council consideration to take 53 pristine acres of federal land, the Central Experimental Farm, and build on it. The NCC was not invited to defend their recommendation. The Dow's Lake portion of the Central Experimental Farm has been used as public park since 1886. We estimate 750 mature and specimen trees will be cut down for this development with over 16.7 acres of 53 acres (31.5%) of the site to be reserved for surface parking.

The north end of the farm, Queen Juliana Park, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau to commemorate more than 7,600 Canadians who died liberating the Netherlands in World War II will become a four-storey, five-acre parking garage. There has been much outrage in Ottawa and the Netherlands at the loss of this park which in summer is used for local Indigenous Pow Wows.

Almost 8,000 people have signed a petition asking for a public inquiry and the numbers grow each day. The dismay began over four years ago when a panel of distinguished Ottawa residents: a retired Ontario, Superior Court judge, a leading world medical physicist, and an internationally acclaimed international investigative reporter asked for a public inquiry to investigate what had happened.

While I was delighted with your and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's announcement that you intend to inaugurate more national urban parks across Canada, it makes little sense that, at the same time you are launching this welcome program, we should be destroying the green heart of a National Heritage Site.



The Farm is simply the wrong site for a mega-hospital. It is wrong geologically, being on a red zone fault line (the Gloucester fault line). It is the wrong site biologically, having trees and gardens and vistas which are irreplaceable. It is wrong culturally. There are good reasons it has been designated as a National Heritage Site. For example, Canadian scientists invented winter wheat here. In addition, it is not appropriate in terms of accessibility. The front door of the proposed hospital is half a kilometre uphill from the nearest LRT transit station a full kilometre round trip. Imagine making this trip in winter, in a wheelchair, which some will have to do.

The reasons given for the rejection of the NCC recommendation of Tunney's Pasture are few and unsupportable. We do not know who was involved or why the change to the Dow's Lake/Experimental Farm site. The decision was made behind closed doors in just a few days. When the Mayor was asked about the decision, he responded, "We have our reasons." Neither the City, the National Capital Commission, the Board of the Ottawa Hospital, nor Public Works and Procurement Canada have provided details.

There have been environmental and transportation studies done before the closed-door decision was made to locate Ottawa's new hospital at the Dow's Lake section of the Central Experimental Farm. These studies were done by the proponent, and unfortunately, not done very well.

We know that the federal government had plans for Tunney's Pasture and that the NCC study noted as a "con" to Tunney's "Potential cost to government (value of land)." We estimate that the development potential at Tunney's could be as much as \$2.5 billion. Finally, there are concerns about developer influence at City Hall, recently demonstrated by the forced resignation of the Chair of the Planning Committee, after an investigation by the city's integrity commissioner. All of this raises questions about the integrity and legality of the process that led to the change from Tunney's Pasture to Dow's Lake/Experimental Farm. We would like an inquiry.

There is a compelling case for you to ensure proper review and assessment. The federal environment minister must step in and request a halt to this misguided project until a proper environmental assessment study can be made.

I am writing to you with the hope that you will agree.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth May, O.C.  
Member of Parliament  
Saanich-Gulf Islands  
Parliamentary Leader of the Green Party of Canada

