

Letter-Writing Campaign to Stop the 413

April 2021

Backgrounder: What You Need To Know About Highway 413

The Problem: The provincial government is planning a new Highway 413, a redundant and unnecessary toll highway that would pave over farm, forests, wetlands and a portion of the Greenbelt and cost taxpayers billions. The evidence shows that by adding hundreds of thousands of polluting cars, SUVs and trucks to Ontario's roads, Highway 413 will make climate change worse and harm the health of people, communities, and sensitive ecosystems.

What Can Be Done: The federal government must do a full assessment of the impact of this highway and all plans must stop until the assessment deems the highway necessary and beneficial to the future of Ontario.

Who is Affected: First, building Highway 413 would mean direct health impacts to nearby communities. The risk of premature death from respiratory illnesses like asthma or lung cancer skyrockets for people who live within 200 metres of a highway or major road. Next, up to 60 per cent of the farmland near the highway will be converted to residential and commercial sprawl by 2050 endangering food security through Ontario and beyond. Third, the Holland Marsh is a wetland and agricultural area in Ontario, Canada and a habitat for countless species to live and thrive. Finally, research projects highway would add 17.4M tonnes of emissions by 2050 thus ensuring that Ontario cannot meet targets to lower emissions and prevent catastrophic climate change.

Why It Is Important: Food security, biodiversity, air pollution, emissions, climate change, government waste - there are so many reasons that this highway is unnecessary and harmful.

Who Needs to Be Contacted: call, tweet and email the Premier (Doug Ford), the Prime Minister (Justin Trudeau); the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Jonathan Wilkinson, your MP and your MPP

What Does Success Look Like: The federal government begins assessment and plans for this highway are put on (hopefully permanent) pause.

Major Talking Points and Letter Writing Structure:

- Stopping this highway construction has support from all types of Canadians, including people like you. Add a few relevant qualities i.e. your location, occupation, age, parent/grandparent and why climate change, biodiversity, responsible governance and food security matter to you specifically;
- This is urgent and cannot wait. The time is now.
- Request a commitment to specific actions like:
 - Ask for a full federal environmental assessment of the proposed Highway 413;
 - Stop the plans for this highway permanently,
- Give a rationale for your requests like:
 - Right now Highway 407 (another toll highway) is underused. Yet the province is proposing to build another east-west toll highway just 15 km away.
 - Building a new highway gets more polluting cars on the road, and usually does nothing to relieve congestion over time. In fact, an **expert panel study** found the highway would only save drivers 30-60 seconds per trip.
 - Building Highway 413 (also known as the GTA West) would cost Ontario taxpayers billions. And it would mean less money is available to invest in crucial public transit.
 - Highway 413 would degrade the parts of the Credit River and Humber River watersheds that flow into Lake Ontario – a source of drinking water for millions of GTA residents.
 - Highway 413 would be 50 km long and would pave over 2,000 acres of Class 1 and Class 2 farmland – among Ontario's most productive farmland.
 - Public opposition to the project is high. Nearly every municipality along its route has either voiced their opposition or joined calls for the federal government to step in, including Peel Region, Mississauga, Vaughan, Halton Hills, Halton Region, Orangeville. While Toronto is not on the route, they too have voiced opposition.
- Thank those addressed for any positive action they have taken in the past on this issue.
- Request that the MPs respond to your letter

Contact Sheet

Emails:

Address message to: The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson Minister of the Environment and Climate Change House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Jonathan.Wilkinson@Canada.ca

CC: Caroline Mulroney, Ontario Minister of Transportation, caroline.mulroney@pc.ola.org

CC: Jeff Yurek, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, jeff.yurek@pc.ola.org

CC: your own MP and MPP.

How to find your politician:

Federal: [Voter Information Service - Find your electoral district](#) (find by postal code)

Provincial: <https://www.ola.org/en/members> (scroll down to find by postal code)

Toronto City Council: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/council/members-of-council/> (find by address)

Links for More Information:

[Is Building Highway 413 the Best option? Report from Environmental Defence](#)

[Stop the 413](#): Environmental Defence Resource Kit

[Highway 413 Locks Ontario Into High Carbon Future](#) (CBC)

[Highway 413 poses a serious threat to many of our most endangered species](#)

[Letter from EcoJustice/Env Defence requesting federal environmental assessment](#)

Letter Writing Tips:

[Writing a Letter to Your MP](#)

[7 ways to write more effective letters to elected representatives](#)