

National **BLUE DOT** Campaign

"All Canadians deserve the right to a healthy environment." This is the key take-away of the Blue Dot Movement, a jointly sponsored partnership of the David Suzuki Foundation and Ecojustice. The national campaign is designed to advance the legal recognition of every Canadian's right to live in a healthy environment.

As Canadians, we should be able to turn on the tap for clean drinking water (currently, on any given day in Canada over 1000 boil water advisories are in place); go for a walk without worrying about the quality of the air we breath, and eat food free from harmful pesticides that should have been banned years ago.

110 nations around the world have recognized the rights of their citizens to live in a healthy environment. **Canada has not.**

Municipalities all around us (173 communities in total in Canada) have endorsed the movement. **But Caledon has not.**

Some of the municipalities that have signed the declaration include our closest neighbours, for instance:

Brampton, Mississauga, Orangeville, Toronto, Halton Hills, Newmarket, Durham Region, Shelburne, Erin, Ajax, and 163 more across Canada.

Where is Caledon?

How long can we continue to call ourselves "the greenest community" without getting on board with this declaration?

This must be an oversight.

GAIL GRANT [REDACTED]

BERNIE ROCHON [REDACTED]

PAT DWYER [REDACTED]

JANICE PARTINGTON [REDACTED]

Model Municipal Declaration The Right To A Healthy Environment

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Whereas CALEDON understands that people are part of the environment, and that a healthy environment is inextricably linked to the well-being of our community;

Whereas CALEDON recognizes the mutual importance and interconnectedness of a healthy environment, a strong economy and a healthy society as we move toward sustainability;

Whereas CALEDON recognizes that environmental protection is a fundamental value held by its citizens;

Whereas CALEDON recognizes that our world and all of its inhabitants are faced with the growing and increasingly urgent impacts of climate change, air and water pollution, and loss of biodiversity;

Whereas CALEDON recognizes the importance of protecting citizens' health from environmental hazards such as air pollution, contaminated food and water, and toxic chemicals;

Whereas CALEDON has a structured sphere of influence and a defined jurisdiction;

Whereas in proclaiming this declaration, Council is articulating public policy principles, but not creating or guaranteeing any legal rights or obligations;

Whereas CALEDON supports the recognition of the right to a healthy environment in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

Whereas CALEDON through the Official Community Plan and its policies, reflects the values of its citizens and demonstrates a commitment to protecting the environment and moving toward a more sustainable future;

Now therefore the Council of [municipality] declares that:

1. All people have the right to live in a healthy environment, including the right to:
 - breathe clean air;
 - drink and access clean water;
 - eat safe and healthy food;
 - access nature;
 - know about pollutants and contaminants released into the local environment; and
 - participate in decision-making that will affect the environment.
2. Within its jurisdiction, CALEDON has certain authority to respect, protect, fulfill and promote these rights and commits to encouraging the respect, protection, fulfillment and promotion of these rights.

3. CALEDON shall apply the precautionary principle by taking measures to prevent the degradation of the environment and protect the health of its citizens where threats of serious or irreversible damage to human health or the environment exist.
4. CALEDON will consider costs to human health and the environment when evaluating reasonably foreseeable costs of proposed actions and alternatives.
5. CALEDON will specify objectives, targets and timelines and actions the [municipality] will take, within its jurisdiction, to address the residents' right to a healthy environment under section 1, including priority actions to:
 - a. distribute environmental benefits and burdens within the municipality, preventing the cumulative health impacts of exposure to environmental contaminants;
 - b. ensure infrastructure and development projects protect the environment, including air quality;
 - c. address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and implementing adaptation measures;
 - d. responsibly increase density;
 - e. prioritize walking, cycling and public transit as healthy and economical modes of transportation;
 - f. prioritize infrastructure and protected water sources for the provision of safe and accessible drinking water;
 - g. promote the availability of safe, local foods;
 - h. reduce solid waste and promote recycling, re-use and composting;
 - i. establish and maintain accessible green spaces in residential neighbourhoods, and protect and conserve nature in public open spaces;
 - j. attract and invest in green businesses, green energy, clean tech and jobs of tomorrow.

CALEDON will review the objectives, targets, timelines and actions every five (5) years, and measure progress towards fulfilling this declaration; and

CALEDON will consult with residents as part of this process.

6. CALEDON will send letters to the provincial government and to the federal government calling for the development of provincial and federal legislation that recognizes the right to live in a healthy environment.