



NDP Responds

Note: We have yet to release our full platform but here are the answers to date outlining our commitments.

Thank you for contacting Canada's New Democrats regarding the Rouge National Urban Park Act.

The NDP always been a strong proponent of the protection of ecological integration and 100 km² healthy national park.

Over the last year, the advice of thousands of Canadians, 106 Members of Parliament, the Ontario Government and several of Canada's top environmental organizations has constantly been ignored by the Conservative Government. The amendments we have introduced in Parliament were voted down and the bill was pushed through.

Rathika Sitsabaiesan, the NDP MP for Scarborough, worked in consultation with local residents, groups, and other interested stakeholders to find a way to fix the Rouge National Urban Park Act. In June, she tabled a Private Member's Bill C-696 in the House of Commons which would fix the serious flaws in the existing RNUP Act by:

1. Prioritizing the protection and restoration of ecological integrity and watershed health;
2. Respecting provincial greenbelt, rouge park, rouge watershed , oak ridges moraine and great lakes water quality agreement objectives and policies;
3. Requiring good public consultation and scientifically sound park management;
4. Supporting healthy and sustainable farming in the park.

Below, please find my responses to your questions.

Question 1: If elected, will you support amendments to the *Rouge National Urban Park Act* and draft park management plan to support the implementation of the *Greenbelt Act* and Plan (2005); *Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) Conservation Act* (2001) and Plan (2002); *Rouge Park Management Plan* (1994) & *Rouge North Management Plan* (2001); *Little Rouge Corridor Management Plan* (2007); *Rouge Park Natural Heritage Action Plan* (2008); and *Rouge* (2007) & *Duffins* (2003) Watershed Plans.

Answer: Yes.

The bill the NDP has put forward would respect and support the implementation of the existing water quality agreement objectives and policies for the provincial Greenbelt, Rouge Park, the Rouge watershed, the Oak Ridges Moraine, and the Great Lakes.

Question 2: If elected, will you support the following amended wording for section 6(1) of the *Rouge National Urban Park Act* as proposed in the Bill introduced by MP Rathika Sitsabaiesan?

The Minister must, when considering any aspect of the management of the Park, give priority to the restoration and maintenance of ecological integrity through the protection and restoration of natural resources and natural processes, while also giving consideration to cultural heritage, farming and infrastructure needs.

Answer: Yes.

The NDP fully supports the legislation which amends section 6(1) of the Rouge National Urban Park Act.

Question 3: If elected, will you support amendments to the *Rouge National Urban Park Act* and management plan to ensure timely implementation of the Greenbelt and Rouge Park North “main ecological corridor” and Environment Canada's science-based recommendations for improving biological diversity and water quality?

Answer: Yes

The NDP understands the importance of ecological corridors for the survival, breeding, safety, and preservation of species. We will immediately move to not just implement, but also to strengthen the science-based recommendations to improve biodiversity and restore and protect water quality.

Question 4: If elected, will you support enlarging the National Rouge Park to 100+ km² by including existing Rouge Valley and Park lands in Scarborough and Markham, and 24 km² of additional federal lands in Pickering to shrink the Pickering Airport Zone?

Answer: Yes.

The NDP have been advocating for 100+ km² National Rouge Park from day one. The community dreamed of a 100 km² park with home to 1/3 of Canada's endangered species. This is the last chance to include these public lands with protection in Canada's most populous and under-protected region – the Carolinian zone of southern Ontario.

Question 5: If elected, will you support amending the *Rouge National Urban Park Act* to remove the dangerous misnomer “Urban” from the park name?

Answer: Yes.

The Rouge Park is special in being located in an urban setting. Roadways, highways, hydro corridors, railways, and oil pipelines are all within the Park. It is a special park because most of our national parks do not have all of these within their protected areas. However, it is unacceptable that the Rouge National Urban Park falls considerably short of federal and provincial standards for protected areas, urban or wilderness. If the NDP becomes government, we will adopt the amendments to the Rouge National Urban Park Act and thereby meet the environmental standards Canadians enjoy and expect within our protected areas and national parks.