



11 March 2015

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq
Minister of the Environment responsible for National Historic Sites
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière
10 Wellington Street, 28th Floor
Gatineau, QC K1A 0H3

By email: Minister@ec.gc.ca

Re: Alienation of Land from the Central Experimental Farm National Historic Site of Canada for the Civic Hospital Campus

Dear Minister Aglukkaq,

As you are aware, Minister Baird announced late in 2014 that Field #1, which represents 60 acres of the Central Experimental Farm National Historic Site of Canada, would be made available to the Ottawa Hospital for a new campus. This decision was undertaken without any public consultation, and I would wager that the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada was not even informed beforehand.

First, there is no question that the Civic Campus of the Ottawa Hospital deserves a new facility.

As a national historic site, the CEF is a place that has been identified for its importance to all Canadians. In a very real sense, it belongs to all Canadians, and it is part of this generation's legacy to our children. It was designated as a significant cultural landscape, and as a centre for scientific advances which has benefited Canada, and continues to benefit Canada. Clearly if it is chopped up, it will lose those qualities that made it an historic site. Do our heritage designations offer no protection?

As well, the CEF is a nationally significant research centre, important for the Canadian economy, and for our food security. Founded in 1886 by Sir John A Macdonald to support the adaptation of agricultural

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science to a new country, the CEF continues to be an open-air laboratory focussed on long-term experiments, specifically soil integrity and climate change impacts to agriculture. Agriculture Canada's own website characterises the farm thusly: [the Central Experimental Farm] "leads Eastern Canada ... in crop development, targeting corn, soy, spring wheat, winter wheat, oats and barley. The Centre has been at the forefront of pioneering gene isolation, gene transfer, and studying gene expression in crop plants for the last 25 years..."

60 acres is over 10% of the total usable crop area. But the impact on the farm won't end there: the insertion of a massive hospital complex will have shadow and other impacts on the remaining, surrounding agricultural lands. Only sixty acres we are told: it doesn't take a crystal ball to see where this is going.

Let's look for a win-win scenario, in which the Civic Hospital gets the new facilities it needs and deserves, and the Central Experimental Farm continues to play its role as a nationally significant research institution and national historic site that benefits us all. The federal government is the biggest single land owner in the national capital region, and other sizeable properties are unused or underused (the CEF is not one of those). Tunney's Pasture, LeBreton Flats, the site of the former Sir John Carling Building on Carling Avenue and other locations could accommodate the Civic's requirements. Let the federal government be generous without destroying a nationally significant research institution.

We have been assured that the CEF is not for sale and the land is only being leased, but this is a rather specious assertion, for once removed from farmland it can never be recovered for its original purpose.

I am asking you, as Minister for Environment Canada responsible for the Parks Canada Agency and thus the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, to stand up for our nation's legacy.

Yours sincerely,

Leslie Maitland, M. Mus., CAHP
President, Heritage Ottawa

Sent by email; letter to be followed by post.

Copied to:

The Honourable Pierre Poilievre, Minister Responsible for the National Capital Commission
Dr. Mark Kristmanson, CEO, National Capital Commission
Alan Latourelle, CEO, Parks Canada Agency
The Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Dr. Richard M. Alway, Chair, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada
Agricultural Institute of Canada office@aic.ca
Doctor Jack Kitts, CEO, Ottawa Hospital

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