

Marit Stiles

LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION
CHEF DE L'OPPOSITION OFFICIELLE
MPP/DÉPUTÉE DAVENPORT

Michelle DiEmanuele

Secretary of the Cabinet, Head of the Ontario Public Service, and Clerk of the Executive Council

August 18, 2023

Dear Ms. DiEmanuele,

As Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition, I am writing to you in your capacity as Secretary of Cabinet, Head of the Ontario Public Service, and Clerk of the Executive Council to ask for your urgent attention and action to secure servers, documents, and personal and government devices of political staff – including but not limited to staff in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Office of the Premier -- the Premier and Members of Cabinet, relating to ongoing Greenbelt investigations.

The Auditor General's Special Report on Changes to the Greenbelt produced troubling evidence regarding the record retention practices of staff in the office of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This included regularly deleting emails related to Greenbelt undertakings, conducting business with developers by way of paper packages exchanged at a private event, and conveying information from developers using USB keys.

We have also learned that an arbitrator is currently considering an appeal regarding whether the Premier's personal phone is subject to Freedom of Information requests. This comes after revelations that the Premier has not been using his government cell phone to conduct government business.

In addition to the Auditor General's now-complete investigation, I have previously asked the Integrity Commissioner to undertake several investigations related to the conduct of the Minister of Housing, his staff, his former staff, and the Premier. We are aware that the Integrity Commissioner has at least one of these investigations underway currently.

Earlier today, I asked the Information and Privacy Commissioner to ensure the preservation of all government documents and full compliance with the province's access to information laws, and to ensure that any conversations that took place on personal devices and accounts, including social media and chat platforms, were made transparent to ensure a return of the public's trust and confidence in their government.

For these reasons, we are asking that your office take urgent steps to ensure that all records pertaining to the government's changes to the Greenbelt are preserved, recovered and retained, including all government servers as the Auditor General's report suggests a proper investigation would require searching government servers for deleted documents, tracking down physical correspondence and hard drives, and identifying any conversations that took place on personal devices and accounts including social media and chat platforms.

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Regardless of the outcome of these other investigations or inquiries, I would like your assurance that your office will do everything in its power to secure these records to support these and future investigations.

Sincerely,



Marit Stiles
Leader of the Official Opposition

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