

Office of the Auditor General
240 Spark Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0G6
ATTN: Ron Thompson
Interim Commissioner of the Environment
June 15, 2007

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Please accept this as a petition under Section 22 of The Auditor General's Act. We need the intervention of the responsible federal ministers to save Golf Dorval, a community jewel on the West Island of Montreal, Quebec. Prime Minister Stephen Harper referred us to Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon, who in turn passed us along to the President and CEO of *Aéroport de Montréal* (ADM), who has virtually ignored our concerns.

We are petitioning that in the interest, the health and well being and the quality of life of the majority of the citizens in the western part of Montreal Island, as well as preserving an important community green space with thousands of trees, wetlands, flora, streams, migratory birds (including blue herons, ducks, egrets and Canada geese), fauna (including red foxes) and a beautiful 36 hole golf course, that the plans to build industrial sites in the territory known as Golf Dorval be halted, until such time as a thorough, Environmental Assessment, with full public consultations, can be conducted.

Aéroport de Montréal was given control over the land that is home to Golf Dorval, in a lease arrangement with the Transport Ministry in 1992. Golf Dorval has been there for 25 years. Last fall, ADM announced plans to expand its operations at Pierre Elliott Trudeau Airport (PET) by moving hangars and maintenance shops onto the south side of the golf course. However, in a move that has nothing to do with airport operations, ADM also proclaimed its intention to create industrial sites on the north side of Golf Dorval. This land would be used to generate revenues for ADM. It is pure land speculation, a cash grab.

ADM's 2005 and 2006 financial statements show a strong cash flow and profits in the \$50 Million range. Destruction of a part of Golf Dorval, in favour of a speculative industrial park, will probably only marginally increase profits. These additional funds are not required in order for ADM to pursue its mission.

These actions by ADM are detrimental to the environment and totally unnecessary, especially given that right next door, literally adjacent to Golf Dorval and PET, there are significant tracts of available industrial land in the Saint-Laurent TechnoParc (see photo attached). There has been little demand for vacant space, however, this province has a history surrounding land development schemes and we are quite concerned.

SOS Dorval, a group formed to preserve Golf Dorval, collected more than 20,000 signatures on a petition to save Golf Dorval. It was presented in Parliament by the Honorable Marlene Jennings to Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon. SOS Dorval has made several requests to meet with ADM's president. All have been ignored. Last month, during ADM's Annual General Meeting, he actually stated that the Q & A segment was our public consultation! There is no record of the proceedings.

We are concerned that ADM is not respecting the rules and regulations that are in place to protect our environment and our social infrastructure, including the principles of Sustainable Development. The land is zoned recreational by the City of Dorval. We believe that ADM is in a conflict of interest with our community.

ADM's proposal to build industrial sites on an existing green space and parkland contravenes "Montreal's Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development" to which it was a signatory in 2003. It is responsible for a huge environmental footprint. (Just one Air Bus A350 taking off and landing, will taint the air that 8,000 people require to breathe for one day.)

ADM boasts of its ISO 14001 Certification, however, that authority requires proper consultation with community and environmental groups as well as concerned citizens. Although he replied to my letter of March 12th, 2007, the President and CEO's letter dated April 4th, 2007, ignored all of my questions. His failure to respond is a violation of ADM's lease with the Minister of Transport (letters attached).

We hope that Environment Canada will ensure that the Canadian Environment Assessment Act (CEAA) is being followed, including full public consultation, and will provide leadership and help to save our valuable community resource, as mandated in the CEAA.

Most of Golf Dorval sits on what was once a huge garbage dump. It was also a dumping ground for a variety of toxic chemicals that were jettisoned over the years by the airport which served as the base for Ferry Command during WWII. No doubt, someone developing a section for an industrial site could trigger a great deal of damage if a sensitive area were to be upset by bulldozers and other heavy machinery.

This activity, in addition to violating the recreational zoning by the City of Dorval, also contravenes the rules of the Quebec Environment Ministry, which had stipulated that it would not grant provincial certification unless there had been proper public consultation for the project by ADM, as well as a zoning change by the city of Dorval, from recreational to industrial.

There are important wetlands in and around the golf course. Three streams have their headwaters nearby and run through Golf Dorval. These streams were home to a variety of spawning fish and other aquatic life, however, their numbers have dwindled considerably if not completely, because of pollution from the airport and nearby industries.

Thousands of trees would be destroyed, many of which were planted over the last 13 years, by the Boy Scouts of Canada, under the "Trees for Canada Program". Because of their proximity to PET, those trees provide much needed filters for the air pollution that is generated by the planes, trucks, buses and cars that frequent the airport.

More than 64,000 rounds of golf were played at Golf Dorval last year. Many companies, churches and community groups hold and sponsor tournaments there, including fund-raisers for charities, and that will all be threatened by this development. Because 18 holes have already been closed for this summer, daily, hundreds of individuals must travel off the island of Montreal to play a round of golf. That's a lot of air pollution and it will only get worse if ADM is allowed to continue with its development project.

There has been no public consultation by ADM re Golf Dorval, and this in spite of the fact that the Green Coalition has written to ADM's President, requesting that we be consulted. He did not even acknowledge receipt of the letter. That is also a violation of ADM's lease with the Minister of Transport.

The Mayor of Dorval, Edgar Rouleau, has written to Prime Minister Stephen Harper requesting his support to save and preserve Golf Dorval for the next generation.

The infrastructure is inadequate to support the increase in local traffic. Nearby Sources Boulevard is already congested with traffic at peak times. Adding hundreds of cars and trucks to the mix will mean a sharp increase in the exhaust emissions and resultant air pollution. Our health will be compromised.

How can this federal government reconcile spending millions of dollars to transplant trees in Vancouver's Stanley Park and a further \$2 million to replace trees felled by a hurricane in Halifax, N.S. and then participate in the needless destruction of thousands of trees in Dorval, Quebec? One department appears not to know what the other is doing. This is not Sustainable Development and it is certainly not in keeping with the Spirit of Kyoto.

Given Montreal Island's acute shortage of green spaces, elected officials should make every reasonable effort to preserve as much existing public green space as possible. Montreal, at 3.2%, has the least amount of green

space of any large city in North America. Toronto has 9%. The UN has suggested 12% should be the norm. For Golf Dorval, one can make a conceptual argument that its reduced area (taking into consideration the projected hangar development) would be like the airport's contribution to the 10% municipal park tax (which they are exempt from because of their status). In fact its area is significantly lower than 10% of the total airport land area.

Finally, one cannot deny that golf is an excellent form of exercise for its participants. The need for affordable facilities will continue to grow as baby-boomers reach retirement age. It is also a sport that can qualify in the federal government's Children's Fitness Tax Credit program, which essentially promotes efforts to combat childhood obesity (see RCGA February 27, 2007 news release enclosed). In considering the fact that three island golf courses (Challenger, Meadowbrook and Metropolitan) will probably start to disappear within the next few years, elected officials should look at the big picture and protect assets such as Golf Dorval when they have the means of doing so. It would be ironic, in the current preoccupation of climate change, if the majority of Montrealers wanting to play the sport would one day have to drive off island to do so.

Ultimately, saving Golf Dorval is a vision thing. A major responsibility of elected officials is to establish a vision that balances, among other items, sustained economic development with quality of life for its current and future citizens. To paraphrase a saying, we are only borrowing the land that will be used by future generations. It would be unfortunate if the current generation did not exercise its full powers to preserve an amenity that clearly will benefit future citizens living on Montreal Island.

Given the foregoing, we would appreciate a response to each of the questions outlined below. Please reply to each point separately.

1. What will the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities do, to ensure that proper consultation with individual members of the community, environmental groups and other interested parties takes place, as per the requirement of the CEAA? We have tried repeatedly to meet with the president of ADM, but to no avail. Will Transport Canada please provide the guidelines and standards required when dealing with the public?
2. Has Transport Canada / ADM conducted an Environmental Assessment in accordance with CEAA? If yes, would you please provide us with a copy of the study? If no, please explain why not.
3. Will the owner of the land, please explain what steps have been taken to protect the wetlands and the streams and what safeguards have been implemented to protect the fish and other natural life that inhabit the ponds and streams in the golf course?
4. Will the Department of Fisheries investigate the situation to determine the extent of the damage and to see if the fish habitat can be reinstated? If so, when? If not, why not?
5. Can the Minister of Transport explain what actions he has taken to ensure that the wildlife residing in Golf Dorval is protected? What will happen to the fauna and migratory birds? Where will they go?
6. Who stands to benefit from the creation of industrial sites on the northern part of Golf Dorval? Is there a conflict of interest involved with the decision makers in determining the fate of Golf Dorval? Are managerial bonuses tied to economic performance alone, rather than to the principles of Sustainable Development? If yes, why?
7. Will Environment Canada require that federal government priorities be adhered to with respect to the environment and as outlined in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999?

8. Will the Transport Minister enforce ADM's adherence to the protocol and make ADM accountable for its commitment to our community as evidenced by its being a signatory to the *Montreal Community Policy Statement on Sustainable Development* as trumpeted on its website under the heading, "Coexisting with Its Communities"? If not, why not?
9. Will the Minister of Transport require ADM to answer all questions posed by the public, and to acknowledge receipt of letters sent, and ensure that appropriate documentation is maintained substantively, as required by the terms of ADM's lease with Transport Canada? If not, why not?
10. Will the Minister of Transport explain why there is no record of the Question & Answer segment of ADM's AGM, especially in light of Mr. Cherry's repeated statement, "This is your public consultation."?
11. What will the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities do, to ensure that proper consultation with individual members of the community, environmental groups and other interested parties takes place? If there is to be none, please explain why?
12. Will the Minister of Transport explain the rationale for ignoring the wishes of more than 20,000 of his fellow citizens and allowing the development of these industrial sites to proceed? If not, why not?
13. Will the Minister of the Environment explain how, if indeed, "The Government of Canada is committed to implementing pollution prevention as a national goal and as the priority approach to environmental protection", why it is permitting the destruction of a green space whose demise will ultimately lead to increased traffic and pollution?
14. The Minister of Transport, as landlord and overseer, is responsible for the actions of its tenant, ADM, and is accountable directly to Parliament for the department's performance against the objectives set out in the strategy for Sustainable Development. Will he explain why environmental and social factors, outlined in the CEAA, were not integrated into the decision making process that will result in the demise of a community treasure in favour of industrial land speculation?
15. Does the Minister of Transport have a plan to save the trees that will be displaced by hangars and maintenance shops and to transplant them? The reason is obvious. If not, why not?
16. Will the Minister of Transport explain why Quebec Environment Ministry rules and regulations are being ignored by his "Branch Office" in Montreal? Why does he not even try to comply? Don't Quebec environmental regulations matter? If not, why not?
17. Given that the Department of Health has budgeted considerable sums of money to promote health and fitness activities, will the Minister intercede to prevent a marvellous recreational venue from being destroyed? Using a Kyoto-like analogy, when some industries cannot fully comply with its objectives because of their type of operation, said industries can "purchase" credits from sources that are below Kyoto norms. Conceptually, keeping a significant part of Golf Dorval in perpetuity would be like a "credit" in favour of the airport. Why don't Transport Canada and Health Canada work together to "purchase credits" in favour of the airport, to recognize the fact that it will always remain a significant source of noise and air pollution for neighbouring residents? It would further promote one of ADM's three basic missions: "to coexist in harmony with the surrounding environment, particularly in matters of environmental protection".
18. Will the Minister of the Environment seek to implement a Kyoto-like plan of buying "credits" to save and to preserve Golf Dorval for the next generation? How and when will he do so? If not, why not?

19. Will the Minister of Transport agree to visit Golf Dorval and to meet with members of the Green Coalition, SOS Dorval, the Mayor of the City of Dorval, a representative from ADM, and a representative from the Quebec Environment Ministry at a time of his convenience, but respecting the urgency of the matter?

This is a wonderful opportunity for the Canadian Government to demonstrate its commitment to the environment, to the quality of life of this community, and to the health of Canadians, rather than to the short term economic pursuits that this project is all about. Please, don't fail us.

Sincerely,

Paul Wilkinson
For The Green Coalition
Dorval, QC