Subject: Urgent Concern Regarding Billy Bishop Airport Jet Expansion and the Threat to Toronto Island's Biodiversity

Dear [MP / MPP Name],

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I am writing to you today as a resident and an active member of Toronto's nature community to express my deep concern over the proposed expansion of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport to accommodate jet aircraft. This expansion poses an immediate, irreversible threat to some of the most significant and fragile natural habitats in our city, particularly the Toronto Islands.

Fifteen critical ecological zones lie directly within the airport's flight path. This includes six Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) on the Toronto Islands and nine others stretching across Cherry Beach, the Leslie Street Spit, High Park, and the mouth of the Humber River. These sites serve as irreplaceable stopovers for migratory birds crossing Lake Ontario and provide essential nesting grounds for native species.

- **Elevated Noise Pollution:** While the government has not yet released the specific models of jets that will be permitted, even the industry's so-called "quieter jets" are louder than the current Dash 8 turboprops. This increase significantly elevates the noise burden on sensitive wildlife populations during critical nesting periods.
- **Degraded Air Quality:** Turbo-fan (jet) engines generally produce significantly higher emissions than turbo-props. The resulting spikes in NOx, SOx, CO, hydrocarbons, and soot threaten not only human respiratory health in the downtown core but also settle directly into the delicate shoreline ecosystems of Lake Ontario.

- **Water Quality and Spill Risks:** Increased jet traffic directly escalates threats to the local aquatic ecosystem. A higher volume of flights requires more fuel trucks—which must board public ferries to access the airport—greatly increasing the potential for fuel spills directly into the lake. Furthermore, the necessary uptick in toxic de-icing fluids will overload the City's stormwater and sewer systems, ultimately discharging directly into the surrounding water.
- **Habitat Devaluation:** Talk of provincial plans to expropriate portions of Toronto Island and Norway Park is difficult to justify when Pearson International Airport remains easily accessible—under 30 minutes away by rapid public transit or vehicle.

Toronto Island is one of the most ecologically diverse areas in the Greater Toronto Area, with 40% of its parklands ranking as high-quality ESA habitats that shelter 85 locally rare plant species. It is among Toronto's top three birdwatching hotspots, with 288 species recorded on eBird. Among the vital wildlife habitats hanging in the balance are:

- The **Piping Plover**, an endangered shorebird that has successfully nested at Hanlan's Point in recent years. **Bald Eagles**, which incredibly began nesting on the Island in 2024.
- **Critical Butterfly Habitat:** The Toronto Islands serve as an essential breeding ground and migratory stopover for butterflies; such as **Common Buckeyes** (which, despite their name, are uncommon to our region).
- Uncommon flora like **Fringed Gentians** in the wet meadows of Wards Island, and newly restored **Marram grass** dunes at Hanlan's Beach that stabilize our coastlines.

The City of Toronto approved a new Island Park Plan in July 2024, aiming to protect the island's ecological integrity while balancing 1.4 million annual visitors. Forcing a jet-corridor expansion directly through this geography completely undermines municipal efforts and compromises our long-term environmental stewardship for short-term corporate convenience.

Once these unique shoreline habitats, sand dunes, and wetlands are degraded, they cannot easily be restored. The decisions made by your government today will shape the ecological future of Toronto's waterfront for generations.

As my representative in government, I urge you to stand up for Toronto's natural heritage. I request that you voice your formal opposition to the Billy Bishop jet expansion, protect our designated ESAs from industrial encroachment, and ensure that Toronto Island remains a refuge for both wildlife and people.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and serious consideration of this urgent matter. I look forward to hearing your position on this issue.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Postal Code / Address]