

THE WEEKLY VOICE

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# Spotlight On Ontario's Great Greenbelt

Continued from page 3

change in size \_ but he didn't explain how that would work.

Those comments came after the Liberals pointed to an on-line video of him - apparently taken in early February when he was a Tory leadership candidate - promising to open up a "big chunk" of the protected region.

Ford said that after consulting with Ontario residents, he had changed course. "I govern through the people, I don't govern through government," he said in explaining the reversal.

Mitchell Kosny, associate director of Ryerson University's school of urban and regional planning, said the Greenbelt was established to control and manage growth. Opening up the area to development would slowly chip away at its integrity, he said.

Development in the protected area would also move the problems of urban sprawl to the region, he said.

"It means more cars, more highways, more pollution, more travel," he said. "It goes against everything I think we would now



think of as, not even progressive, just mainstream planning."

Meanwhile Premier Kathleen Wynne says that if re-elected this spring, her Liberal government will expand the Greenbelt, a stretch of protected land whose future has been a political hot

potato roughly a week before the province's election campaign gets underway.

Wynne pledged to extend the Greenbelt into ecologically sensitive areas such as the Orangeville and Oro moraines and the Nottawasaga River corridor, saying

the areas have already been put to community consultation.

The Liberals, meanwhile, have accused Ford of making back-room deals with developers and said he can't be trusted to preserve protected lands. Pic: www.greenbelt.ca

## Nigerian Migrants

Continued from page 3

and women face high rates of domestic violence from their partners, as well as the threat of genital mutilation.

Canada's more progressive laws and attitudes towards these populations make it a more desirable place to live, Beuze pointed out.

"They think that Canada will be a country where they will receive asylum and where they feel they will be able to integrate and resume a normal life, far away from persecution."

Individuals and families fleeing from the violence and oppression of Nigeria are well versed in Canada's immigration laws and have likely seen the statistics showing

Nigerian refugee claimants have a 35 per cent success rate in having their claims accepted, Olalere said.

That's why he believes the flow of migrants from Nigeria may not soon be over. "I don't see this ending any time soon."

Meanwhile, a U.S. State Department spokesperson said on Monday that work is ongoing to improve the screening processes for American visas, keeping in mind a need to balance safety and protection concerns of those applying for entry with legitimate travel and immigration to the United States.

However, no changes have yet been made to the U.S. visa application process he said.

## Auto Insurance System 'Needs A Rethink'

Continued from page 3

"I estimate that in the last five years alone, the overpayments might have totaled \$5 billion," said Fred Lazar in the report. "This represents 9.5% of the total premiums paid during this same amount of time."

That works out to an additional \$143 for every policy in Ontario per year, for each of the last five years!

The Ontario Trial Lawyers Association (OTLA), which commissioned the report, concludes that Ontario's auto insurance system - where accident victims are not treated fairly, premiums

continue to increase, and insurers enjoy excessive profits - needs to be thoroughly debated during the election campaign and overhauled. "This update is just another example of how Ontario's auto insurance system is in need of a complete rethink," said Claire Wilkinson, President of OTLA. "It underscores the extent to which our system is completely dysfunctional," she added.

"Let's face it, no one looks at Ontario as a model of how to structure an insurance system."

"Instead, with respect to auto insurance, Ontario serves only as a cautionary tale - a bad example to be avoided at all costs."

OTLA is calling for greater transparency and reporting of the profits enjoyed by the automobile insurance industry. The provincial auditor should be involved to provide that level of clarity.

"By increasing transparency and reporting the government and consumers would have a better understanding of just how much profit is currently enjoyed by auto insurance companies in Ontario. These are the first steps in restoring balance to ensure justice for accident victims and fairness for drivers," said Ron Bohm, President-Elect, OTLA.

Founded in 1991, the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association (OTLA) is an organization of more than 1,500 plaintiff lawyers, law clerks, articling students and law students. Its purpose is to promote access to justice for all Ontarians, preserve and improve the civil justice system while at the same time advocating strongly for safety initiatives. For more information, visit www.otla.com.

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## All Villages In India Electrified

NEW DELHI: All villages in India have now been connected with electricity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced

On Saturday evening, Leisang village in Manipur's Senapati district became the last village to be connected to the national power grid. As per official data, there were 18,452 villages without electricity in the country at the time of Modi's taking office in May 2014.

"Electricity reached all Indian villages on Saturday," Modi said in a tweet. "Yesterday, we fulfilled a commitment due to which the lives of several Indians will be transformed forever!," he said in another tweet.

The government has set the next target of providing electricity connections to over 4 crore rural and urban households by March 2019.