Dear Premier Ford:

RE: Vehicular Traffic and Safe Capacity on Local Beaches

The Town of The Blue Mountains is one of Ontario’s premier tourist destinations and, with the current desire for staycations we are being over-run by visitors from the GTA. This is causing issues in managing increased vehicular traffic and the safe capacity on our beaches. We have taken the position that as Ontarians we are all in this together and therefore from the beginning, we have been reluctant to ban visitors.

We in the Town of The Blue Mountains are doing our best to manage the situation. For example, we have hired 8 additional by-law officers for the summer. We will have a by-law staff of 13 for the summer, this for a community with a permanent population of 7,025, or the equivalent of the City of Toronto having a by-law staff in excess of 5,000.

These officers will manage parking, as well as safety and social distancing at our parks and beaches. This has already paid dividends as our by-law being present was instrumental in two successful water rescues carried out by our fire department in the last few weeks. We have had excellent cooperation from our OPP detachment as well.
We cannot manage the situation we find ourselves in alone and therefore we have two simple asks from your government, neither of which require funding, only quick action:

1) As an urgent safety matter, we ask the Province to temporarily reduce the speed limit on Highway 26 to 50 kmph from a point 300 m west of the entrance to Craigleith Provincial Park to the east end of the village of Craigleith, as is done for construction zones. With the large number of people crossing the highway on foot to access the waterfront and the heavier than normal traffic volume, it is almost a certainty there will be a fatality there in the near future.

2) Increase the amount of usable waterfront at Craigleith Provincial Park by cancelling campsites along the waterfront and converting the area to day use. We have very little usable beachfront and this would greatly alleviate the overcrowding on our beaches.

We look forward to your timely consideration of these two requests.

Yours Truly,

Mayor Alar Soever
Town of The Blue Mountains

CC: Hon. Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General (via email only)
Hon. Caroline Mulroney, MPP, Minister of Transportation (via email only)
Hon. Jeff Yurek, MPP, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks (via email only)
Hon. Jim Wilson, MPP Simcoe-Grey (via email only)
John Fisher, Superintendent, Craigleith and Wasaga Beach Provincial Parks (via email only)
Eric Doidge, Assistant Deputy Minister – Operations (via email only)
Council, Town of The Blue Mountains (via e-mail only)
Shawn Everitt, CAO, Town of The Blue Mountains (via email only)
Shawn Carey, Director of Operations, Town of The Blue Mountains (via email only)
Will Thomson, Director of Legal Services, Town of The Blue Mountains (via email only)
Department File – C2048