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Sandra Candow
Project Lead, Ottawa Hospital Site Review
Chief of Federal Approvals
National Capital Commission
202-40 Elgin St
Ottawa, ON K1P 1C7

October 3, 2016

Dear Mrs. Candow,

I am writing to offer my input into the National Capital Commission's (NCC) Ottawa Hospital Site Review. In keeping with the NCC's three criteria for its site selection, I will offer my feedback on the hospital's needs, the research currently being conducted on the Central Experimental Farm (the Farm), and the land usability.

When then-NCC Minister John Baird and Ottawa Hospital Chief Executive Officer Jack Kitts announced in November 2014 that they would be using the federal land across the street from the current Civic Campus to build the new Civic Campus, they did not do so rashly. Their announcement was the result of seven years of talks and an expert panel's consideration of 12 sites – many of which are sites you are currently reviewing.

The government listened carefully to the hospital's needs. This is a 92 year-old hospital in desperate need of replacement. It has already taken nearly a decade to get this far, so I encourage the NCC to place the hospital's needs at the forefront of this review. The hospital asked and is still asking for 50-60 acres of land, which eliminates the Booth Street option from the NCC's possible sites. It must also be centrally located to serve the downtown core, which eliminates the West Hunt Club, Pinecrest Creek, and Merivale-Woodroffe Corridor options. As well, experts such as Doctor Chris Carruthers, the former Chief of Staff of the Ottawa Hospital, have opined that the new hospital must contain single rooms to prevent the spread of infection; must be located close to the University of Ottawa's Heart Institute; needs to offer close, quick access to Highway 417; and needs to be close to the Royal Ottawa Hospital so that the two can share equipment.¹ Locating the new hospital on the Farm met and continues to meet these criteria.

Some opponents of locating the Hospital on farm land claim that the Farm is sacrosanct. Some of them back up this claim by implying that the Farm won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.² This hyperbole does a disservice to the actual work that has been done by thousands of hardworking scientists. In reality, the 2007 Nobel

Peace Prize was awarded to Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in recognition of their many years of research. Some of the IPCC's research may have included data from the Farm, but it is a mistake to conclude that the Farm "won" a Nobel Prize. In fact, so many of the IPCC's contributors have made this mistake that the IPCC was forced to clarify in 2012 that, no, its contributors are not Nobel Prize winners.³ It is clear that the Farm has contributed to many scientific studies in the past, but the question the NCC now faces is whether current and future research should outweigh the current need to replace a 92 year-old hospital.

Does the research currently being done outweigh the value of a new hospital? This is what the hospital's opponents claim. But what *specific* research is being done there? This is a question both Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson and I have asked the NCC, to which no answer has yet been given. A June 2016 document from Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lawrence MacAulay does briefly mention some soil tillage and carbon cycling experiments,⁴ but it does not satisfactorily answer the question.

To find greater specificity, a recent report by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development may help. In June 2016, her office compiled the responses from the federal government regarding the environmental impact of locating the new hospital on the Farm.⁵ According to a joint response from Environment and Climate Change Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the particular plot of the Farm that would be used for the new Civic Campus is being used as follows:

- There are currently eight experiments
 - Two were completed in March 2016 and would not be "affected by the decision to transfer the land from the Farm"
 - One will be completed in March 2017 but losing "one year of data on one site" would be "unlikely to significantly impact" the research project
 - Five will be completed by March 2018, and of these five, only one requires use of the Farm site because of its characteristics
- There are also three studies planned for a future date. One of these studies could be done on land elsewhere and the other two would preferably use the Farm because of its characteristics.

Opponents of locating the hospital on the Farm claim that the Farm is essential to environment and climate change research, but this report – compiled by the Environment Commissioner with responses from Environment and Climate Change Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada – says exactly the opposite. Even the departments' responses to the Commissioner with regards to the two future-planned studies that should be located on the Farm offer little specificity. My office will continue to seek clarification.

It is clear that the greater good would be served by using a small portion of the Farm – roughly six percent - to build a new state-of-the-art hospital facility. The timing of the experiments seems to offer a reasonable and practical solution: allow the five studies to conclude on schedule by March 2018, which would be almost five years before the Hospital would like to break ground in 2023. As for the two future-planned studies that the government says should be located on the Farm, there is no reason why they cannot be located on another part of the Farm, or at another site or facility. Making this decision now would allow Agriculture almost 18 months to find alternative sites.

As the NCC no doubt found in its search for the 12 potential sites it is now reviewing, it is not easy to find an appropriate-sized parcel of land in the downtown core of a G7 country's national capital. It is clear that whichever of the 12 sites is chosen, it will displace something else. Choosing Tunney's Pasture will displace thousands of current and future public servants, and require that a currently-planned residential development be cancelled; choosing either of the West Hunt Club locations will result in the loss of part of the Greenbelt. Likewise, it is clear that regardless of which site is chosen, someone will complain about something. Since the NCC's review process began, almost every site has seen at least one person or organization complain about some aspect of the potential site – whether it's Lincoln Fields or the Farm. We are building a G7 nation's capital, and it will require a vision that serves current and future residents well into the next century. I encourage the NCC to rely on its criteria of a functional and operational hospital that serves the capital's residents so that this vision is realized.

I hope that the NCC will conclude that the decision made two years ago was the right one, and allow the Ottawa Hospital to get on with building this important new hospital on the federal land directly across the street from the current Civic Campus.

Sincerely,



Hon. Pierre Poilievre P.C., M.P.
Carleton

¹ Chris Carruthers, *Why the new Civic must be built on the Farm – and fast*, Ottawa Citizen, May 2, 2016, online: <<http://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/columnists/carruthers-why-the-new-civic-must-be-built-on-the-farm-and-fast>>.

² Coalition to Protect the Central Experimental Farm, letter to federal ministers, November 23, 2015, online: <<http://www.csla-aapc.ca/sites/csla-aapc.ca/files/Advocacy/Coalition%20to%20Cabinet%20Nov%202015%20FINAL.pdf>>.

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Statement about the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize*, November 2012, online: <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/nobel/Nobel_statement_final.pdf>.

⁴ Inquiry of Ministry, Q-184, response tabled in the House of Commons on June 14, 2016.

⁵ Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, response to petition 388: *Protection of the Central Experimental Farm as a Research Facility and a National Historic Site of Canada*, online: <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/pet_388_e_41408.html>.