

OPINION
& EDITORIALS



The CENTRAL NEWSPAPER

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It’s time for municipalities to end Land Acknowledgements...

As many of our readers will know, a so-called Land Acknowledgement is read aloud at the start of every Oshawa council meeting, every committee of council, and even when you go to see the Generals play at the Tribute Communities Centre. It’s a statement that, on its surface, appears simply to serve as a gesture of respect for Indigenous peoples, however it is being used for much more. Just to be clear, no government or body explicitly mandates land acknowledgements for all Canadian municipalities. Their adoption is in fact a voluntary practice, often initiated at the local level in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action. In other words, there is no legal requirement from a higher level of government (provincial or federal) that forces municipalities such as Oshawa to do so. This newspaper is in favour of ending land acknowledgements due to the practice being ineffective and for the most part counterproductive. As it happens, there are many critics, including some Indigenous people and scholars, who argue that the current practice can cause more harm than good. These so-called land acknowledgements have become nothing but a subtle but repetitive attack, not only against non-Indigenous people (the majority of this country’s population) but also the very existence of Canada as a valid nation. Many acknowledgements contain historical inaccuracies or use generalized language (e.g., calling Indigenous peoples “stewards” of the land). The arguments we would bring forward stem from a more fundamental opposition to the premise and mandatory nature of these acknowledgements, and the fact they appear to violate the principle of institutional neutrality and freedom of expression. There is an agenda that seeks to compel individuals to agree with a specific political stance, and to begin to question the reality in this country that laws apply to all Canadians equally. In addition, it is unreasonable to expect people today to apologize or make reparations for actions that occurred centuries ago, especially in cases where land was legally transferred through treaties at the time. The mandatory nature of the statements has led to legal challenges, with opponents arguing that such policies overstep jurisdictional boundaries for public bodies like school boards and municipal councils. It’s time to end the use of land acknowledgements forever.

How much more will average families spend on food in 2026 ?

The latest Food Price Report produced by several Canadian universities is projecting an average family of four will pay an estimated \$994.63 more for food in 2026. The increase, making for an estimated total bill of \$17,571.79, comes from a projected four to six per cent inflation rate for food next year, according to the report produced by the agri-food analytics lab at Dalhousie University in partnership with several other universities. How did we get to this point? When Mark Carney’s Liberal cabinet was sworn in seven months ago, he was asked how his government would be held to account, suggesting Canadians judge him by “their experience at the grocery store.” Ever since, month after month, grocery prices have continued to rise, and families are struggling to put food on the table. It’s expected to get even worse, with Canada’s Food Price Report 2026 noting, “If 2025 was difficult for Canadian households, 2026 is unlikely to be easier.” The report finds that food prices will cost Canadian families almost \$1,000 more per year. Compared to the 2015 household food budget of \$8,286, families will spend 112 per cent more next year – more than double in just a decade. Nearly 85 per cent of Canadians said that food affordability is their largest financial concern, with a record 2.2 million visits to food banks in a single month. Higher prices are leading 86 per cent of Canadians to say they’re eating less meat due to its high price point. The report also notes that “very rarely have we seen all three main components of the meat trifecta – beef, chicken, and pork – become more expensive at the same time in a single year.” The report found that high prices are leading to Canadians “compromising healthy food choices in favour of more cost-effective yet less nutritious options.” Nearly a quarter say they would eat healthier, and 20 per cent would buy higher quality food if only they could afford it. It’s being driven in part by higher operating costs on our farmers, which rose 2.5 per cent in one year. Higher energy costs increased the price of fertilizer, fuel for farm equipment, and the cost of transporting food from farms to stores. Producers were forced to take on 14.1 per cent more debt in 2024, the largest annual increase since 1981. The Conservative opposition in Ottawa brought forward certain proposals to lower the cost of food by removing the taxes that drive up the prices at the checkout counter – and to reduce the size of the record-high deficits that continue to drive up the cost of pretty much everything, but the Liberals voted against both. With food inflation double the Bank of Canada’s target and prices rising 48 per cent faster in Canada than in the US, we can’t afford the cost of the Liberals’ inaction. It’s time to end the taxes that are making food so unaffordable for so many Canadians.

We can’t afford a mass extension of Temporary Resident Visas...

The federal Liberals are now considering using certain measures to alter the status of visas or permanent resident cards in order to mass-extend temporary work visas. During a debate on Bill C-12, also called the Strong Borders Act, officials were unable to provide concrete examples of how they intended to use the sweeping powers that form part of the bill. The opposition parties successfully amended the legislation to include a requirement that the federal government report to Parliament on how they use those powers, for the Immigration Minister to come before a Committee when they are used, and clarify that the powers cannot be used to mass-convert temporary residents into permanent residents. Statistics Canada has revealed that the Liberals missed a whopping 38 per cent of temporary residents in its last census. This was on top of a story from earlier this autumn that described how over a million temporary residents have expiring visas. Last spring, the Liberals admitted they had no plan to get these non-citizens to leave once their visas expired. For months, they have resisted opposition party efforts to disclose exit and entry information, raising questions about the accuracy of the exit data. These issues, combined with the lack of clarity from officials on how they plan to use the powers in Part 7 of Bill C-12, led the opposition Conservatives to give notice of an amendment to the bill, which would prevent the Liberals from using these powers to mass-extend all types of temporary resident visas. Canadians should have confidence that those who are supposed to leave Canada will do so. The same goes for the provinces, whose hospitals and classrooms have come under extreme pressure after a decade of Liberal mass immigration. This is yet another mess from the last decade that needs to be cleaned up.

The CENTRAL NEWSPAPER welcomes your submissions and letters
As The CENTRAL works to provide an interesting and accurate reflection of the communities that make up Durham Region through our weekly news pages, we invite local citizens to participate in the conversation through submissions and letters to the editor. We truly appreciate and support your efforts to make The CENTRAL your own.
Letters and submissions are welcome at newspaper@ocentral.com

Letters To The Editor:

WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND? Send letters to newspaper@ocentral.com
Dear Editor:

I am a director on the Port Perry Agricultural Society/Fairboard. The Township of Scugog has hired a consultant to perform a visioning exercise to help them make decisions regarding the disposition of the 23 acre park, known as "The Port Perry Fairgrounds" since 1886. The Port Perry Agricultural Society feels that this historic site should continue to be the recreational, cultural, community gathering place, that it has been, for over a century. Please consider publishing the following for your readers. You may have heard... You may have heard someone say that the fair grounds is only used 3 days per year, and that the land is too valuable to sit unused for the rest of the year. In reality, this 23-acre municipal park is used for assorted recreational activities daily, by joggers, walkers, dog walkers, parents looking to give their children a place to run around, and folks simply seeking some open space and solitude. In addition to the annual Labour Day Weekend fair, the Port Perry Agricultural Society hosts numerous events over the year. These events include: The Terry Fox Run, The Touch a Truck Event, The Food Truck Festival, The DFRFR Farm Safety, The February Family Day Event, The Strong in Scugog Strong Event, The Craft Show, The 4-H Holstein Club, The Durham West 4H Judging School, Durham Regional Police Safety Day, The VE Day Celebration, Marshaling of the Santa Claus parade, Big Brothers/Big Sisters Summer Golf Camp, Drive in concerts for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Fundraising walks for ALS, and Oak Ridges Hospice. Fundraising snowball tournaments for local organizations. The fairgrounds has provided off site parking during construction at the Port Perry Villa and the Ontario Hydro projects. The fairgrounds has been used as a staging ground and basecamp for numerous movie production crews. The Township of Scugog uses the fairgrounds for snow storage, when clearing the town streets each winter. The Care and Share Gardeners, who donate their produce to the food banks, attend their plots on the fairgrounds throughout the growing season. The entertainment shelter is used by dog obedience schools, cloggers and other dance schools, and the Port Perry Dukes Ukulele Club. There have been yoga practice and aerobics. The baseball diamond is used for practices by various groups. The race track is used for training exercises by the local schools, and students gather here after school to practice their skills. The Township of Scugog Fire Department practices on the fairgrounds. Individuals can be seen practicing their golf swing, flying kites and operating remote controlled aircraft and other remote controlled vehicles. In the winter one will see individuals cross-country skiing and kite skiing. All of the above activities, occur within walking distance of most of the town of Port Perry. Are You Aware? The Port Perry Agricultural Society (PPAS) has paid all of the costs of maintenance of the Fairgrounds for many decades. These costs include water and sewer, electricity, garbage pickup, insurance, grass cutting, tree trimming and maintenance, upgrading electrical infrastructure, and upgrading and maintenance of all buildings and structures on the site. The Township of Scugog, and the Region of Durham have given the PPAS no financial assistance for over 20 years. We receive no tax dollars. Many years ago, the Township of Scugog would give the PPAS \$1000 annually for the production of the fair. That annual grant was discontinued by the Township a long time ago. Most of the PPAS's annual income, comes from the fair, and this income in turn, supports production of the next year's fair. The PPAS is anxious to make improvements to the Fairgrounds that would make the land even more attractive to the community. Historically, the community has been very supportive and generous, donating labor, materials, equipment and money for projects on the Fairgrounds. The PPAS has been successful in obtaining government grants for larger projects in the past. Without a lease of at least 5, and more often 10 years, the PPAS does not qualify for government grants, and the community is understandably more hesitant to donate, when the land may be disposed of by the Township of Scugog in the relatively near future. Did You Know... The Port Perry Agricultural Society conducted a survey in August 2025, asking folks what they would like to see on the fairgrounds. Suggestions included, more trees, more gardens, picnic tables, a picnic shelter, a band shelter which could accommodate summer concerts and movie nights, pickle ball courts, and a sand ring (for accommodating equine events). People requested more car shows, tractor shows, and educational events that featured agriculture, gardening and horticulture. The Port Perry Agricultural Society is eager to pursue all of these options, but without a lease for a reasonable length of time, it is not feasible to raise the funds required. You will recall that the Port Perry Agricultural Society receives no taxpayer money, and no funds from the Township of Scugog.

Thank you for your consideration, Paul Puckrin

Dear Editor:

I am writing to formally report my serious concerns regarding ongoing environmental contamination and associated public health risks stemming from the site of the former Fittings Limited plant in Oshawa (Bruce Street area). Based on the known history of the site and the chemicals involved, I believe there is an urgent need for re-evaluation and public disclosure of the environmental impact, particularly concerning air quality.

Key Environmental Concerns: The Role of Contamination Plumes

The primary concern is the presence of contamination plumes in the soil and groundwater. As a result of the former industrial activities, hazardous chemicals—including Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and "Forever Chemicals" (PFAS)—have migrated over time, creating extensive underground plumes. Persistent Contamination: Due to the nature of these plumes and the chemical stability of substances like PFAS, it is practically impossible to fully remove or remediate all the chemicals from the affected areas of the groundwater and soil. Air Quality Risk (Vapour Intrusion): The groundwater and soil contamination continue to release hazardous substances. These VOCs and other toxins pose a significant risk of vapour intrusion, where they move up through the soil and into the air, potentially affecting indoor and outdoor air quality in the surrounding residential and commercial areas. This represents a long-term exposure pathway for the community.

Public Health and Cancer Risk

I am aware that the chemicals associated with this type of industrial contamination (VOCs, PFAS) are known to be carcinogenic (cancer-causing) and linked to serious chronic health issues. Furthermore, it is my understanding that local data in the Oshawa area has shown higher-than-expected cancer rates, which may be connected to long-term exposure to these environmental contaminants. This makes the potential for ongoing air exposure a critical public health emergency that requires immediate attention and transparent communication.

Request for Action

I urge the Ministry, the City of Oshawa, and the Durham Region Health Department to: Acknowledge and publicly address the long-term, widespread contamination plumes (air, soil, groundwater) emanating from the former Fittings Limited site. Increase and publicly report on continuous air quality monitoring (specifically testing for VOCs and PFAS vapours) in the areas immediately surrounding the site and in nearby residential homes. Initiate a public health study to formally assess the correlation between the known contamination and the reported cancer rates and chronic illnesses in the surrounding community.

I request a formal response detailing the steps that will be taken to investigate and mitigate this persistent, life-long public health risk.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Avery
Concerned Oshawa Citizen,
Ontario Tech University