



For immediate Release

Searching for accountability as the Ontario Place costs mount: What's in it for Ontario?

Three community-based organizations with an interest in the future of Ontario Place have filed a request with the Auditor General of Ontario to conduct a value for money audit and a compliance investigation in connection with the Therme spa proposal.

The groups are looking for clarity as to how the public costs associated with the project line up with the potential benefits.

"Ontarians have a lot of valid concerns with this project" says Diane Chin, President of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. "The Auditor General is perfectly positioned to get us some answers about the true costs of a project which also threatens an internationally significant cultural heritage landscape."

The Ontario Place development application filed with the City of Toronto confirms that massive subsidies have been extended to Therme, an Austrian spa group that has a conditional lease from the Province to turn the West Island of Ontario Place into a franchise of its European commercial spa operations.

"At a time when emergency rooms are overwhelmed and there is a critical need for affordable housing, how do Ontario taxpayers and residents benefit from up to \$500 million in corporate welfare going to support a private spa?", says Norm Di Pasquale, Co-Chair of Ontario Place for All.

In addition to an estimated \$200 million in costs for servicing and site preparation, the Province has committed to providing an additional 1000+ parking spaces by building a 5-storey underground garage. It has been suggested the cost for that could run to \$300 million. Behind the scenes, an extraordinary amount of provincial staff time has gone into preparing the complex rezoning and development application on behalf of Therme.

The groups have also asked for a compliance investigation looking at whether the province is also offside the Ontario Heritage Act, Environmental Protection Act and the Environmental Assessment Act.

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