



NEWS RELEASE: October 28, 2009

Toronto Becomes World's First City to Mandate Bird-Friendly Buildings



Toronto -- In a historic move, Toronto City Council passed a motion yesterday making parts of the **Toronto Green Standard** – which applies to all new construction in the city – mandatory. The standard, which has been voluntary until now, incorporates the **Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines (BFDG)** designed to eliminate migratory bird collisions with buildings both at night and in the daytime.

Beginning January 31, 2010, all new proposed low-rise non-residential, mid to high rise residential and industrial, commercial and institutional development will be required under Tier 1:

GLASS AND OTHER DESIGN FEATURES FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS: Ensure that design features minimize the risk for migratory bird collisions.

- Treat glass with a density pattern between 10-28cm apart for a minimum of the first 10-12m of a building above grade

OR

Mute reflections for a minimum of the first 10-12m of a building above grade

- Ensure ground level ventilation grates have a porosity of less than 2cm X 2cm
- Where a green roof is constructed that is adjacent to glass surfaces; ensure that the glass is treated to a height of at least 12m above the level of the green roof to prevent potentially fatal window collisions.

LIGHT POLLUTION: Reduce nighttime glare and light trespass from the building and the site.

- No up-lighting from exterior light fixtures unless otherwise permitted through a Heritage designation
- Install exterior light fixtures that are shielded to prevent Glare and/or Light Trespass onto any neighbouring properties.

Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker, who has since 2004 championed bird-friendliness for Toronto Council, also moved – which was carried unanimously – the following:

That the Toronto Green Standard report be circulated to the following organizations, and that they be requested and encouraged to adopt similar environmental standards, especially with regard to the Bird Friendly Guidelines and Light Pollution:

- **LEED:** Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (Green Buildings Certification Institute)

continued...

Working to Safeguard Migratory Birds in the Urban Environment through Education, Research, Rescue, and Rehabilitation.



- **BOMA:** Building Owners and Managers Association
- **BILD:** Building Industry Land Development Association
- **Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative**
- **Canada Green Building Council**
- **AMO:** Association of Municipalities of Ontario
- **FCM:** Federation of Canadian Municipalities

The Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP), the driving force behind **BFDG**, is thrilled with this development. Michael Mesure, FLAP’s Executive Director, says: “FLAP’s years of tireless work in bird conservation has finally produced one of our most desired results, which up to now could only be dreamed of. Let us not forget: Toronto could never have become a champion in bird-friendliness without the pinnacle roles played by the stakeholders of **Lights Out! Toronto, Toronto City Council,** and **City of Toronto Planning Department** staff. For this, FLAP and the birds are eternally grateful.”

FLAP is a non-profit charity founded in 1993 to address the issue of bird collisions with human-built structures. In 17 years of bird rescue, FLAP volunteers have recovered over 45,000 birds from 162 species, all victims of collisions with Greater Toronto Area buildings. Forty percent of these birds were rehabilitated and released to continue their migration. If not for FLAP, likely none would have survived.

FLAP’s efforts to minimize bird collisions with buildings and bring this issue to the forefront of bird conservation activity have captured the attention of leading biologists. Many now believe this to be the single greatest cause of bird mortality. Our work has convinced architects, designers, building owners, planners and politicians that radical steps are needed to be taken in Toronto and beyond.

As one of the world’s major cities, Toronto has made a decision with significant implications for bird conservation world-wide. Window manufacturers, who have been reluctant to design windows and mirrored walls that appear opaque to birds and thereby prevent collisions, will now realize an opportunity to invest in bird-friendliness. Green building rating systems, like LEED and BOMA BEST, will now be compelled to incorporate bird-safe design into their ecological building criteria. What’s more, light pollution, which has been a growing problem in the city for decades, will start to diminish as we formally acknowledge the danger it poses for night-migrating birds, and, at the same time, address having the view of the stars, reducing our carbon footprint, and creating a healthier urban environment for everyone.

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For more information:

Michael Mesure, FLAP Executive Director 416-366-3527 www.flap.org

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• Dundee Place 1 Adelaide Street East, PO Box 175 Toronto, Ontario M5C 2V9 • Tel.: 416-366-FLAP (3527) • Web: www.FLAP.org • E-mail: flap@FLAP.org •

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