

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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PETITION TO UPDATE THE ONTARIO BUILDING CODE TO INCLUDE BIRD-FRIENDLY GLASS

TORONTO – This week, people all over the world are taking action for birds by participating in Global Bird Rescue and helping save birds that strike windows on buildings. However, further action is needed from our government to curb the risk of collisions while the number of glass buildings in Ontario continues to grow. FLAP Canada is calling for the public to sign a petition urging the province to update the Ontario Building Code to require bird-friendly glass, a measure that would save countless birds' lives, and set us on the right path toward conserving Ontario's bird Species at Risk.

Collisions with windows result in millions of bird deaths in Ontario each year and represent a leading source of bird mortality. There are solutions that can significantly reduce bird-window collisions: bird-safe technologies can be incorporated into the design of new builds, as well as retrofit products for existing structures, that help make glass more visible to birds. However, these solutions will not be implemented effectively province-wide unless they are required by the Building Code.

“For bird populations to be sustained, the design of buildings in Ontario cannot continue to ignore the ecological consequences of untreated plate glass killing birds. We are calling on Hon. Steve Clark, the Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH), to incorporate the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) 2019 Bird Friendly Building Design standard into the Ontario Building Code. Our efforts to invite MAH to discuss this potential has fallen on deaf ears. We now invite members of the public to sign the petition,” said Michael Measure, Executive Director of FLAP Canada.

Currently in Ontario there are several municipalities with their own requirements or guidelines to encourage bird-friendly design in all new mid- to high-rise buildings. However, this piecemeal approach to conserving birds does not reach far enough across Ontario. As best management practices and the commercial market for bird collision prevention technologies continue to evolve, it would be necessary for collision mitigation strategies reaching architects and municipal planners across Ontario to be consistent with the CSA's standard. A province-wide requirement for bird-friendly building design through the Building Code is imperative.

The risk of bird collisions is highest at single-family dwellings, simply because they are the most numerous types of building. However, existing municipal standards apply only to larger buildings that require site plans. The exclusion of new residential buildings from bird-friendly design legislation is unacceptable. Developers must be instructed by the province to commit to designing all new structures containing plate glass to comply with best practices under the CSA standard in order to minimize the risk of bird collisions.

The science is clear: many of Ontario's migratory bird populations are in steep decline. Unless we take meaningful conservation actions right now, we risk losing irreplaceable bird species in the coming decades. Birds are ecologically, culturally and economically important to Ontarians. We cannot afford to continue growing the threats that endanger birds in our backyards.

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