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## A summary of advocacy efforts to date related to bird-building collisions and incorporating bird friendly building design into the Ontario Building Code

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Each year, around 25 million birds are killed in Canada as a result of needless collisions with windows on buildings. Fatal strikes with buildings thus represent one of the leading threats to wild birds, including at least 24 Species at Risk in Ontario. Most bird-window collisions happen during the daytime because birds mistake the reflections on glass for extensions of vegetation and sky or fail to see the transparent glass. Bird-window collisions are preventable at existing buildings by applying treatments on windows that provide a visual signal to birds that they cannot fly through (e.g., building retrofits), and at new building construction by incorporating materials and practices that are safe for birds. Today, a variety of bird collision deterrent technologies are commercially available in Canada, but no requirement currently exists for industry professionals and government agencies to adopt them. New buildings are continually erected across Ontario using materials that will contribute to more bird fatalities.

Several Ontario municipalities have followed the City of Toronto's lead by introducing municipal by-laws that require the incorporation of bird friendly design into all new site plan designs. However, this piecemeal approach is inadequate to ensure that migratory birds receive sufficient protection throughout their range in Ontario and creates unnecessary complexity and confusion for developers due to differing municipal design requirements. A high-level approach to this pressing issue would prove more effective, implementing bird friendly building design requirements at the provincial level.

Since 2020, Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) Canada, as well as other environmental, architectural, and animal rights groups, have advocated for meaningful government policy to address the risk of bird-window collisions at newly constructed buildings in Ontario. Specifically, these groups have proposed incorporating sections of the [CSA A460:19 Bird Friendly Building Design standard](#) into the Ontario Building Code, to effectively mandate that all new building construction in the Province of Ontario uses materials that are proven bird-safe. This push is supported by [several petitions](#) that have collected over 20,000 signatures.

In 2021, MPP Chris Glover (Ontario NDP), representing Spadina-Fort York, introduced a [private member's bill](#) in the Ontario legislature urging the government to update the Building Code to incorporate the A460:19 standard. To date, over 30 MPPs from the Ontario New Democrats Party (NDP) and Ontario Green Party (GPO) have confirmed their support for this initiative. The organizers are not aware of any supporters from within the Ontario Liberal Party or Progressive Conservative (PC) Party of Ontario.

The current government under Doug Ford, via responses to inquiries from citizens delivered by various Conservative MPPs, has indicated that they do not intend to update the Ontario Building Code. Their responses point to two pieces of justification, neither of which hold up to scrutiny:

**Claim 1):** The Federal government will update Canada's National Building Code in the future, and so the proposal should be redirected to the Federal government instead.

**Rebuttal:** In fact, the National Building Code update may not happen for another several years, and nothing prohibits provinces from updating their respective Building Codes in the meantime.

**Claim 2):** The CSA A460 standard includes elements that are not related to the Ontario Building Code (e.g., landscaping) and thus incorporating A460 into the Building Code is inappropriate.

**Rebuttal:** The proposed update to the Ontario Building Code would only incorporate elements of the A460:19 standard that are related to new building design, including window glass and lighting.

Furthermore, we submitted a letter to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks requesting information about bird-building collisions and the Endangered Species Act. [The minister responded](#) but did not address our concerns.

We believe that sustainable development in Ontario is not achievable if the province continues to ignore proven methods to prevent wild bird fatalities. Bird conservation and prevention of human-caused bird deaths should not be a partisan issue. FLAP Canada is encouraging candidates in the 2022 Ontario Election to sign the [Pledge for Birds](#) Signatories will receive updates about future opportunities to support this cause.

*Our vision: a 24-hour collision-free built environment for migratory birds.*  
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