

Hello, my name is Veronica Crespo. I am a feminist activist and citizen of Pierrefonds and I will be discussing my view against the development of L'Anse à L'Orme from a human rights perspective. Please note that I am bilingual and you may question me in French after if you like. Both ecologists and human rights activists have the same goal : to defend life, the planet and human dignity. I will thus more specifically concentrate somewhat on the right to a healthy environment, a perspective I think has been absent from the debate thus far.

According to Amnesty International, Human Rights are “ basic rights and freedoms that all people are entitled to regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, language, or other status.” We have them because we are human beings, it is in our DNA, thus they are intrinsic and cannot be taken away from us. They are also indivisible, meaning that to violate one is to create an obstacle to the enjoyment of another or to violate it as well. I believe that this project, Cap Nature will have the effect of violating, directly and indirectly, multiple human rights, namely the right to a healthy environment thus the right to a good quality of life, the right to security of the person, the right to health and the rights of future generations to enjoy equally all of these rights. The right to a healthy environment may be a new one to some, but it is supported by multiple human rights documents & related rights . The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the right to security of the person, article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic social and cultural rights (ratified in 1976 by Canada) states that all have “ the right ... to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The steps to be taken by the states party to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include ...the improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene.” Since 2006 the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms of Quebec, section 46 states that “Every person has a right to live in a healthful environment in which biodiversity is preserved, to the extent and according to the standards provided by law.” The urban sprawl, destruction and pollution generated by this project are the main sources of violations.

Water pollution will be produced by urban sprawl due to water run off and the elimination of the many marshes in L'Anse à L'Orme. Marshes act as filters and eliminate up to 90 percent of pollutants in water, according to the American Sierra Club. Clean water is also a human right because it is essential to our lives and our health. The main sources of water pollution due to urban sprawl are oil, gas, chemical and other substances produced by human activity getting into water runoff and thus into nearby lakes and streams, such as the already polluted Rivière à L'Orme and the nearby Rivière des Prairies river which is used for multiple recreational activities ( such as the Cap St-Jacques beach and kite-surfing at the nearby Parc L'Anse à L'Orme water access) as well as our drinking water. As reported by an article published in the American Journal of Public Health in 2010, 'Urban Sprawl, Smart Growth and Deliberative Democracy' by Dr David B. Resnik of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, 'poor water quality is associated with a variety of negative health outcomes, including diseases of the gastrointestinal tract, kidney disease and cancer'. It is also worth noting in passing, particularly as this area of Montreal flooded a while back and is in fact a flood plain, that the to be destroyed marshes can act like sponges that absorb water, meaning that building in this area is a security risk.

Cap Nature will also produce more air pollution, largely due to an increase in cars. As calculated by Juste Rajaonson in his study 'Analyse des contraintes, coûts et impacts d'un éventuel projet immobilier dans Pierrefonds Ouest' available on the OCPM's website, the volume of cars could increase by 7700 or by 9%. This of course does not include other vehicles such as buses and trucks that would also be

necessary in the area for deliveries and people who don't drive. Among the most well known side effects of urban sprawl are car dependence, as people are unable to get around efficiently without one particularly towards the city centre. The link between air pollution and respiratory problems, such as asthma or bronchitis for example or even lung cancer is well known. According to an article published in the Public Health Report, edition March-June 2000 "Among the most important health effects of energy use are the deaths and disease that result from air pollution. The vast majority of the pollutants most clearly linked to increased morbidity are energy related".... and that in a 1997 Toronto region study "from the core to periphery, [urban] density declines fourfold, car ownership per household goes from 50% to almost 100% and miles driven per capita more than triples. The result is a threefold increase in estimated carbon dioxide and other emissions as one moves from the core to the suburbs." Given that air does not recognize borough boundaries, the air pollution generated will add to the existing problem Montreal wide, which will inevitably affect those most vulnerable in our society more & violate their right to health & to a healthy environment. We have all seen smog or air pollution alerts here in Montreal where people with certain conditions are advised to not even go outside or exert themselves.

Urban sprawl and the dependence on automobiles, in addition to pollution & water pollution, has the effect of reducing physical activity due to increased sitting in cars. Exercise is crucial to good health & quality of life but urban sprawl, due to automobile dependence, contributes to many diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular problems, stress, etcetera. I am aware that the proposal for this project includes public transportation, but as mentioned earlier public transportation will still contribute to air pollution and greenhouse gases. Many times have I been stuck on Gouin Boulevard and other places in the West Island in a bus, trying to get to work or anywhere on time. The elimination of vegetation will also further contribute to the heat islands effect. Montreal is warmer already than surrounding areas due to this. It will only get warmer with climate change, which does aggravate health & pollution here in Montreal and across the world meaning we are also affecting other people's right to a healthy environment. We need to do our part, thinking globally and acting locally by not destroying L'Anse à L'Orme and thus contributing to the wider pattern of cutting down pieces here and there for development.

This project will also upset the quality of life for local residents, affecting their right to a peaceful home life. The increase in traffic, pollutants and noise due to 5500 more residents, although given the population stats of Pierrefonds Ouest being dominated by families in single homes it will be more, possibly around 11000 or more, will affect their well-being. This places an unjust burden on them who have chosen to live in this quiet corner of Montreal.

Ultimately, this project is not sustainable. According to the Winnipeg-based International Institute for Sustainable development, sustainable development is defined as :

“ development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- the concept of **needs**, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- the idea of **limitations** imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs."

The information document for Pierrefonds Ouest produced by the city of Montreal speaks of combining development with the enhancement of natural environment, of outlining the development and conservation of the sector, of an integrated and balanced approach that seeks equilibrium between

the conservation of natural environments and real estate development, of creating a network of parks and green spaces, of design and urban design meeting the highest standards of quality reducing the sector's ecological footprint to a minimum, of planting trees, shrubs and vegetation along streets and trails and public spaces and parking areas to counter the heat islands phenomenon, of managing water ecologically and lastly of how part of the area will be preserved. The developers website about the project spouts much of the same. The idea that we can cut down L'Anse à L'Orme, conserve nature and improve upon nature is incoherent & the functions listed such as reducing heat island and managing water are already produced freely by nature. I am cognizant of the fact that this project has a social element to it in terms of social housing to meet the needs of those lower in the socioeconomic ladder in our society's right to housing. It is much needed in Montreal due to the exorbitant cost of rent. But there are other places in Montreal that can be built on closer to the centre and this is not a case of not in my backyard. The best thing is densification, something that this project does not do. As I have discussed in this brief, environmental destruction, urban sprawl and pollution are an affront to the right of a healthy environment. The most sustainable thing to do is not develop L'Anse à L'Orme and to turn it into a park to contribute to the right to environmental health & contribute to the health of people by giving them an additional space for recreation in a city already affected by pollution and sprawl. This project is also an affront to the right of future generations to enjoy equally the right to a healthy environment and thus the right to a good quality of life, the right to security of the person and the right to health. It places a burden on them as the effects of pollutants and sprawl are not limited in time and nor are human rights. We can no longer have the 19<sup>th</sup> century mentality that development means unlimited growth and consumption- it is the very opposite. We need to maintain the natural systems that we depend upon as living creatures. We are not above nature, we do not dominate or completely control it, we are part of it, we breathe the same air and drink the same water as other creatures. Nature has a right to exist in and of itself. We need to live in harmony with it, it is in our own interest.

The responsibility of government is to protect and care for its citizens. This unsustainable project does not accomplish that & violates people's rights. Government has the responsibility to continually improve the quality of life and the environment of its people. This project does not do that either. It has the responsibility to protect people now and in the future against pollution generated by private individuals and industry. This project does not do that. The government must prioritize the well being of the people over the profit of Grilli, Développement Pierrefonds, Les immeubles l'Équerre, Quartier de l'ouest de l'île and HPFCO - we have the right to self determination, profits do not. We are the ones who must decide, our rights and the right of future generations matter more. Well-being should be at the centre of everything in order to advance the social and environmental justice of the people of Pierrefonds and Montreal. I do not live in the West Island because it is a cement block, I live here because it is green and the vast majority of people I have met are against this project. I could not imagine urban sprawl into the L'Anse à L'Orme area, destroying such beauty. We do not own the planet, we just live here and need to leave it in better shape than we got it.