PLEASE SEE THE TWO HIGHLIGHTED AREAS BELOW THAT NEED TO BE COMPLETED.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Recently (Name of RA) joined the [We Love Oakville](https://www.weloveoakville.org/) grassroots organization composed of groups in Oakville to **Stop Amalgamation**, and we are appealing to you to support this campaign.

As you have chosen to make Oakville your home, we would like to make you aware of the Province’s announcement on January 15, 2019 to conduct a [Regional Government Review](https://www.ontario.ca/page/regional-government-review) of eight regional municipalities (including Halton Region), Simcoe County, and their lower-tier municipalities “to ensure that regional governments are working efficiently and effectively.” A two-person advisory body was appointed to submit recommendations from the review and their consultations to the Honourable Steve Clark, the [Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing](https://www.ola.org/en/members/all/steve-clark).

The [Regional Government Review](https://www.ontario.ca/page/regional-government-review) is a flawed process. **Engaging two advisors to review not 5 (Halton Region and its 4 municipalities) but 82 municipalities in less than six months and making any credible recommendations is beyond superficial.** Our regional governance structure works well, so our focus should continually be on improving rather than destroying it.

One of the clear possible, and many say probable, outcomes from this review is a proposal that Oakville will be amalgamated with the other Halton Region municipalities, Burlington, Milton, and Halton Hills, to form a large regional bureaucracy, the City of Halton. *What will this mean for you and our community?*

The municipalities of Halton have very different fundamental characteristics and needs. To name but two, compare the low population density of Halton Hills to that of Oakville that is 6 times higher, and a population growth rate of 30% in Milton that is 7 times higher than that of Burlington. Each of our municipalities has developed and evolved differently based on its own needs, vision, character, culture, and priorities.

*Forced amalgamation will therefore be extremely costly in financial, social, and human terms*. All of this will be compounded by years of disruption, confusion, and conflict as each municipality has its own unique vision, character, and set of issues. The financial cost of forced amalgamation will be enormous. A large regional bureaucracy will be more costly to operate than our current decentralized government system. Studies by respected organizations on previous Ontario amalgamations conclude that they did not result in cost savings, lower property taxes, or any tangible benefits. The authors of the 2015 [Fraser Institute](https://www.fraserinstitute.org/research/municipal-amalgamation-ontario) report, for instance, found that “in each case, we see significant increases in property taxes, remuneration, and long-term debt.”

*Forced amalgamation will not produce benefits.* While counterintuitive*,* multiple studies throughout the world have shown that municipal amalgamations rarely work. Benefits are very hard to get and, where they are realized, they take very much longer to appear.

*Forced amalgamation will mean a loss of our voice.* A large regional bureaucracy will be more removed from the citizens it serves, more difficult to govern and control, and less responsive to local needs of the residents. Under jeopardy is Oakville’s Official Plan that protects the character of our stable neighbourhoods and our environment and directs growth to appropriate areas.

*Forced amalgamation is trying to fix a system that is not broken.* Our two-tier (local and regional) government in Halton efficiently and effectively serves the residents of Oakville and its other municipalities at the local level, while providing coordinated planning and shared services across the region as evidenced by these indicators:

* Oakville and Regional property tax increases have been kept at or below the rate of inflation.
* Halton has a [Aaa credit rating](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwebaps.halton.ca%2Fnews%2Fmediashow.cfm%3FMediaID%3D2018-02-22-09-43-01&data=02%7C01%7C%7C8a2c14ee32494233499d08d69b292909%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C636866998410758495&sdata=T9X0MJwFDMJSqkc6tBwkIpPISKPmE2j61tsRhSWwPRw%3D&reserved=0) and consistent job growth.
* All four municipalities in Halton Region are ranked amongst the best places to live in Canada. (MoneySense 2018)
* Halton is considered to be one of the safest regions in Canada.
* Throughout Halton, 98% of residents rated the quality of life very high and 97% are satisfied with the quality of all services.

*Bottom line*:

**Forced amalgamation will have serious financial, social, and human consequences**. Property taxes will increase and the level and quality of services at the regional and local levels will likely be negatively impacted – everything from policing, fire protection, waste collection, snow removal, community centres, and libraries. AND Within a large bureaucracy, our voices will be lost. **These are risks that we should not be prepared to take**.

If you support **STOP AMALGAMATION**, we encourage you to act:

* Visit [We Love Oakville](https://www.weloveoakville.org/) to get the facts and subscribe to our newsletter.
* Send a strong message to Queen’s Park that you are opposed to amalgamation. Write a [letter](https://www.weloveoakville.org/write) to both Oakville MPPs.
* Donate to the [campaign](https://www.weloveoakville.org/donate).
* Be a champion for Oakville – share this e-mail with your family and friends in Halton and follow [We Love Oakville](http://www.weloveoakville.org/) on [Facebook](https://nam05.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fweloveoakville.org%2F&data=02%7C01%7C%7Ce8a5f27ea6994ad70dc008d69abd37cb%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C636866534808270820&sdata=o9S6l%2BRMZNcRN65cRT%2Bg97VKVEVooaB8ShqwR7ExB2A%3D&reserved=0), [Instagram](https://nam05.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.instagram.com%2Fweloveoakville%2F&data=02%7C01%7C%7Ce8a5f27ea6994ad70dc008d69abd37cb%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C636866534808280928&sdata=jmechUZhnTf8AzF0ajXbJQTk4dcTOHI9zzwr0h2qS9A%3D&reserved=0), [Twitter](https://nam05.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FWeLoveOakville&data=02%7C01%7C%7Ce8a5f27ea6994ad70dc008d69abd37cb%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C636866534808290848&sdata=I0xS1a0A1OH4QkaNG1VS2wfJo4QGeUiryLyB9W6Zvrw%3D&reserved=0).