August 30, 2023 ***VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL***

Marit Stiles  
Leader of the Official Opposition

Dear MPP Stiles,

Thank you for your letter dated August 18, 2023, expressing concerns about the Government of Ontario’s record retention practices and associated transparency issues outlined in the Auditor General’s *Special Report on Changes to the Greenbelt*.

As you are aware, records relating to government business, regardless of the medium in which they are created, sent, or received, are subject to Ontario’s access and privacy laws. The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA) govern the handling of such records and are in place in part to safeguard the public's right to access information and to ensure that government decisions and actions are carried out openly and transparently. The particular access to information issues raised in the Auditor General’s report fall within my jurisdiction and are subject to my office’s oversight.

Further to this mandate, my office has already received several access to information appeals under FIPPA regarding the Greenbelt matter. It is anticipated that the processing of these appeals will address the record retention and access to information issues raised in the Auditor General's report and referred to in your letter.

Records retention is a key component of protecting the public’s right of access to information and is critical to ensuring transparency and accountability of government decisions and actions. The IPC is committed to conducting fair and impartial inquiries into these issues in the context of the appeals before it and to making their outcome known through a public order once they conclude.

I would like to thank you again for bringing forward your concerns that records relating to government business, regardless of the medium in which they are created, sent, or received, remain subject to Ontario’s access and privacy laws and must be governed accordingly to safeguard the public's right to know and ensure that government decisions and actions are carried out openly and transparently.

In the interests of transparency, this letter will be publicly posted on the IPC’s website.

Sincerely,

Patricia Kosseim  
Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario