

From: Susan <susan@theravinaproject.org>
Sent: March 12, 2020 1:02 PM
To: Standing Committee on Social Policy <comm-socialpolicy@ola.org>
Subject: comment on Bill 171: Building Transit Faster Act 2020

To: Mr. Eric Rennie, Clerk of the Committee

I am writing to express my concerns about the new transit legislation Bill 171: Building Transit Faster Act 2020. I have lived in Toronto all my life and am a property owner in the area effected by the new Ontario Line, particularly the above-ground portion in Toronto's east end. I share with most Torontonians the desire to see an improvement and expansion of Toronto's public transit system. Careful planning by Toronto's municipal government has gone into this issue, only to have this planning set aside in order to implement some new ideas from our present provincial government.

Planning and implementation of these new ideas has been given to Metrolinx, an agency under provincial government control. Bill 171 appears to reduce and at times, eliminate public input into this planning process, with a new cut back, expedited Transit Project Assessment Process replacing the previous Environment Assessment. Given that the above-ground sections of the Ontario Line pass through densely populated residential areas, a thorough environmental process would be needed to assess the effects of noise, vibration, air pollution, etc. on area residents.

I also understand that Metrolinx can use or modify municipal infrastructure (roads, bridges, sewage and water works, etc) without needing the approval of the democratically elected municipal council. Obviously the council that represents the needs and concerns of the people of Toronto is being ignored. In addition, the individual landowner rights are being bypassed by Metrolinx's ability to enter land near their projects to remove trees etc. without obtaining any permit or the consent of the property owner. Also the homeowner or business owner whose land may be expropriated would no longer have the right to request a Hearing of Necessity.

The ability of the community to comment on or be involved in the implementation of the Ontario Line appears to be very limited. The one "community consultation" I attended on January 28 at Metropolitan Community Church consisted of hundreds of area residents who were concerned about increased rail traffic and other related issues, being herded into the narrow church aisles to view a number of cardboard signs.. This is not what I would consider a "community consultation".

In order for the Ontario Line process to be successful, Metrolinx and the Ontario government need to establish a working group to co-ordinate construction with the community, and to ensure that area residents' concerns are addressed. Also there must be an agreement by Metrolinx to co-ordinate with the City of Toronto and other co-ordinating bodies to ensure that the construction process does not seriously impair the use of municipal and utility infrastructure.

The premier's pledge to create a government "for the people" does not seem to be implemented in the planning process for the Ontario Line, where the rights of the individual citizen and of our elected council are being trampled on.

I would like to be informed of the time and place of the public hearing (I understand on March 23, 24). I do not plan to speak, but I plan to attend, if I am available. Please accept this note as a true representation of my concerns about this piece of legislation. Thanking you for your attention.

Susan Fraser