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From: I and G Shelton <i.gshelton@sympatico.ca>
Sent: November 28, 2020 5:16 PM
To: Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Cc: premier@ontario.ca; minister.fin@ontario.ca; minister.mah@ontario.ca;
minister.mnrf@ontario.ca; minister.mecp@ontario.ca
Subject: Changes to the Mandate of 36 Conservation Authorities - Bad Idea

Dear Clerk of the Standing Committee and Members of this Committee:

It is astounding that this Conservative Government in Ontario will be doing so much to undermine the mandate of the 36 Conservation Authorities in this Province by hiding its plans to curtail the role of the Conservation Authorities within the omnibus Budget Bill 229.

Like so many actions of this Government, the public good goes to the bottom of the list and the rights of developers move to the top of the list.

I have several concerns about the numerous changes to the Conservation Authorities Act (CAA) in Schedule 6 of the omnibus Bill, including:

- Reducing the ability of Conservation Authorities to act as independent public bodies in land use planning, including removing their ability to seek to appeal municipal planning decisions;
- Introducing new rights for developers to force fast-tracking of development approvals and to appeal decisions they do not like, without providing the same opportunity to citizens who may wish to challenge decisions that damage the environment; and
- Giving the Minister new power to overturn a Conservation Authority's decision to refuse to issue a permit for development.
- Restricting the duties of Conservation Authorities' members so that they no longer must act to further the watershed-based mandates of the Conservation Authorities, but rather can act only on behalf of the narrower interests of their respective municipalities;

Why must this Government always cater to developers and ignore those who care about preservation of precious natural resources? **Can no one** on this Committee or elsewhere within this Government comprehend that once land is covered in industrial, commercial structures, it is gone forever?

There are so many serious consequences to removing control over the conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources from the Conservation Authorities and giving such control to pro-developer Ministers who potentially have little expertise in land and water use and preservation.

Conservation Authorities have a vital role to play in preventing uncontrolled development that results in the loss of wetlands, woodlands, and one of my prime concerns, farmland. The citizens of Ontario deserve protection from unchecked development by unscrupulous developers.

Schedule 6 will dismantle the integrity of the Conservation Authorities across Ontario. This is a bad idea!

THEREFORE, I respectfully ask the Government to withdraw Schedule 6 in its entirety from Bill 229.

Sincerely,

Georgina Shelton
Essa Township