

Douglas, Julia

From: Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Sent: November 28, 2020 5:51 PM
To: Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Cc: Teng, Deborah
Subject: Webform submission: Submission of material 27741

Categories: Green Category

Submitted on Sat, 11/28/2020 - 16:06

Application ID: 27741

Submitted values are:

Bill or item of business: **Bill 229, Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act (Budget Measures), 2020**

Choose a topic

Do you know the bill title or business (e.g., pre-budget consultations) you'd like to speak or submit material about?

Yes

Choose an application

Which application would you like to submit?

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[Written Submission Deadline: 7:00 p.m. \(EST\) on Wednesday, December 2, 2020](#)

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Are you submitting material as an individual or on behalf of an organization?

I am submitting material as an individual

Full name

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Paste submission

I am in agreement and do support the Canadian Environmental Law Association's submission to this public hearing, dated November 27, 2020. The submission refers to Bill 229, Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act (Budget Measures), 2020.

They recommend and I fully agree with their statement that -
Schedule 6 (proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and consequential amendments) and
Schedule 8 (proposed changes to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994) both be withdrawn in their entirety
from Bill 229.

The link to their submission is here:

<https://cela.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CELA-Bill-229-Schedules-6-and-8-Submission-to-Standing-Committee-Nov-2020-1.pdf>

My own comments, as a private citizen and a senior who has lived all of my life in Ontario, for asking for the withdrawal of Schedule 6 and 8 from Bill 229 are:

1. My adult children grew up in Ancaster, Ontario and they and my wife and I benefited greatly from being near the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority. Their education programs helped our kids to understand the value of nature and the absolute need to protect it. We could walk on the Conservation lands trails anytime of year and we did so. I cannot imagine weakening Conservation Authorities as has been done already with cuts to their budgets. My wife and I have also been members of the Bruce Trail Conservancy since its inception in the 1960's. We knew some of the pioneers who developed that nature trail along our wonderful Niagara Escarpment. We have contributed to the purchase of lands that will be kept natural and enjoyed by many coming generations. This is what we should be doing, not weakening Conservation Authorities protections of natural landscapes that our grandchildren and their grandchildren can continue to enjoy.

2. These schedules do not belong hidden in an Omnibus Budget Bill. They should be out in the open as Environmental legislation that is subject to robust public comment. They have nothing to do with a COVID-19 Recovery Act.

3. This is a bad time to be removing protections of wetlands, forests, meadows, species at risk and endangered species in Ontario as these Schedules will do if our Conservation Authorities are weakened. With respect to wetlands, experts indicate that we have only 1% of the original wetlands left in Ontario and we can ill afford to be removing them all piecemeal as Schedules 6 and 8 would permit. It is well known that wetlands provide a valuable service - millions of dollars - in cleaning air, water and providing necessary habitat for migrating birds, reptile such as snakes and turtles and amphibians such as frogs, toads and salamanders. I have personally visited wetlands in Picton, Ontario and several in cities in Northern California that are used as the final step in sewage treatment and also serve as wildlife parks that are visited by thousands of people.

4. We are living in what is now described as the Anthropocene Epoch, which means that we humans are presently having the most pronounced negative influences on nature. It means that we and our children and grandchildren are living in the greatest extinction event in 65 million years (that was the Dinosaur extinction) and we humans are the cause of the present extinction. We should not be making it easier for subdivision developments and forest clearcutting to cause species who live there to go extinct. The remaining green spaces that we still have, particularly in Southern Ontario need to be protected from development of any kind. Subdivisions should no longer be permitted to be built on green spaces. There is plenty of room in our present cities and on brown spaces for density increases to accommodate projected human growth in Ontario.

5. Allowing Schedule 6 and 8 to be passed will just allow for more 'sprawl' of housing developments on green spaces. These developments have no provision for public transit, so that the only means of travel for residents is the private automobile. This will just add to the already terrible gridlock on our roads and highways and will be

the cause citizens to lobby for more road space on agricultural land and sensitive green spaces (think of proposed Highway #413). For reasons of addressing the Climate Crisis we need to be reducing automobile use, not increasing its use.

6. Since Covid-19 is given as the reason for including Schedules 6 and 8 in an Omnibus Budget Bill let me add that scientists who study these matters are telling us that Covid-19 is an environmental catastrophe, caused by viruses that exist in an endemic way in wildlife, that jumped to humans in a wet market in Wuhan China sometime last year. The same kinds of events have happened in Africa with the jump of Ebola viruses from monkeys to humans. These events are happening because humans are invading nature to such an extent that we humans are coming into contact with biological material that we should not be in contact with. To me this is a kind of disrespect of nature. Instead of increasing the destruction of nature we should be doing our utmost to protect natural habitats that are left to us. Scientists are also telling us that we need to be setting aside as much as 40 to 50 % of landmasses and oceans as natural areas with minimal human contact. In fact where ocean reserves have been set up, they have allowed diminished biodiversity to make a come back in decades that the scientists say is remarkable. Again I say that Schedules 6 and 8 should be removed from this Omnibus Budget Bill 229.

7. Schedules 6 and 8 are an assault on local democracy. They will allow an Ontario government Minister to bypass all the environmental protections in law as well as prevent local public comment on proposed developments, by allowing a Minister to use what is called a Minister's Zoning Order or MZO. This had a use in the case of a collapsed roof of a supermarket in Elliot Lake, so that a new supermarket could be built quickly. But the present use of MZO's by a Minister to do an end run around lawful Environment protections of a wetland such as the Duffers Creek Wetland near Pickering in order to build warehouses on that wetland is a travesty and an abuse of a MZO and should not be permitted. Conservation Authorities represent local democracy at work and Schedules 6 and 8 allow a government Minister to run roughshod over local decision making. We need more local democracy, not less.

8. Finally I am very concerned with what kind of world we are going to leave to our children, grandchildren and their grandchildren. If we allow every green space near us and afar to be paved over with sprawl, very soon we will have only ourselves left in a stripped down planet. I don't think that we can survive the wanton destruction of what is actually our own life support systems. And I think that it is psychologically damaging to us to realize that we are becoming more and more lonely as we see the coming extinctions, not only of our favourite large animals but of creatures that we have not even identified yet. We really don't know what creatures are living in each of the separate biomes and environments that our Creator left us to live with. It behooves us to stop destroying. Please remove Schedules 6 and 8 from Bill 229. Thank you,

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