

Kattar, Vanessa

From: David Martel <martel.david@sympatico.ca>
Sent: December 1, 2020 2:00 PM
To: Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Subject: Bill 229

Categories: Green Category

Julia Douglas, Committee Clerk

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

99 Wellesley Street West, Room 1405

**Whitney Block, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2**

Dear Ms. Douglas:

I am deeply concerned about several of the provisions in Schedule 6 of Bill 229: Protect, Support and Recover from COVID 19 Act. I understand this Bill has passed second reading in the provincial legislature and has now been referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

Generally speaking, many do not favour omnibus bills, for they are often a mechanism to include unpopular legislation in with meaningful and valuable initiatives. In this case, I strongly oppose the proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act set out in Schedule 6 of Bill 229 that curtail the role of Conservation Authorities in watershed planning and management. I am also deeply concerned that these proposed changes were brought forward in a budget bill, thereby over-riding my right to comment under the Environmental Bill of Rights. In Stormont and Glengarry (where I live), the Raisin Region Conservation Authority provides important services to the community through its programs in watershed monitoring, flood forecasting, wildlife and habitat restoration, recommendations on mitigation measures to minimize the environmental impact of new developments, amongst other significant activities. Its dedicated and professional staff have provided exemplary services concerning these matters to Stormont and Glengarry.

Ontario's Conservation Authorities are a unique and widely respected innovation. They provide a much-valued bridge across municipal boundaries to understand and address environmental concerns, such as flooding. Because they operate at the watershed level, they are ideally positioned to encourage science-based collaborative strategies and decision-making. Their vital role in land use planning and permitting must be retained to ensure that development does not put communities at risk from flooding and other climate change impacts through loss of wetlands, woodlands and farmland.

The changes proposed in Schedule 6 will reduce or constrain the mandate of Conservation Authorities, and are therefore contradictory to the interests of the people of Ontario who are facing enormous risks and costs as a result of climate change and ongoing biodiversity loss. The roles and responsibilities of Conservation Authorities are critical in protecting the lands, waters and wildlife which benefit businesses and communities across Ontario, and upon which our health and well-being ultimately depend. We must

consider strengthening, not weakening, the regulations that allow conservators everywhere to excel at their jobs.

I urge the Government of Ontario to remove Schedule 6 in its entirety from Bill 229.
G. David Martel

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