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To whom it may concern

I think that the Government should withdraw Schedule 6 from the omnibus budget bill. This bill has little to do with the budget and, if passed, could have a devastating effect on Ontario's natural environment. The bill would permit the ministry, without any consultation with or input from those have experience with environmental issues, to make far-reaching decisions about what happens to our wetlands and the natural lands in our watersheds. In short, the conservation authorities, who have been outstanding stewards of our environment, can effectively be by-passed.

In addition, Schedule 6 could also gut the boards of the conservations authorities from environmental experts, who have real knowledge about our natural world and our impact upon it. It seems counterproductive to rule out academics and scientists who actually study what keeps rivers healthy and replace them with municipal councillors who could have little to no knowledge about these issues. Moreover, the commitment could in some cases completely overburden the councillors, who are already extremely busy. Our natural environment in southwestern Ontario in particular is shrinking and what's left is extremely fragile. This is why the expertise and experience of the conservation authorities is so important as we move forward with development. As your government is fond of saying, "Ontario is open for business", but to keep our natural environment sustainable, business development has to be done right – not just for us, but for our grandchildren's children. The conservation authorities have done an outstanding job over the decades. Let them continue to do their amazing work. To ensure that happens, Schedule 6 must be removed from the omnibus bill.

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