

Douglas, Julia

From: Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Sent: December 2, 2020 10:45 AM
To: Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Cc: Teng, Deborah
Subject: Webform submission: Submission of material 28526
Attachments: Bill 229.docx

Submitted on Wed, 12/02/2020 - 10:31

Application ID: 28526

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?

Submit material only

Add your information

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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Document upload

- [Bill 229.docx](#)

Paste submission

Re: Removal of Schedule 6 and Schedule 8 from Bill 229

It was only through the Canadian Environmental Law Association's diligence that I became aware of the grave threat posed to our Environment by Schedule 6 and Schedule 8 in the government Bill 229. I find it unconscionable that this catchall bill be used as a way to sneakily further the government's pro-development agenda at the expense of the common good. By including Schedule 6 and Schedule 8 in a budget bill the government is blatantly trying to circumvent the public's ability to comment through the Environmental Bill of Rights for Ontarians denying our rights as citizens to speak up for the integrity of our Environment.

The title of Bill 229 'Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act' alone 'calls' for it to be passed quickly as it 'addresses' one of the biggest crises this province has ever faced. However, looking into what this bill actually covers, one finds a collection of 44 unrelated Acts ranging from: Alcohol, Cannabis and Gaming; to Assessment; to Credit Unions; to Early Childhood Education; to Fuel Tax; to Ontario College of Teachers, to name five. It is not clear how any of the Acts relate, in any way, to COVID-19. Perhaps the purpose of the bill is to do some 'house cleaning', tidying up some Acts by making minor adjustments to existing Acts to make them more relevant to our times or to perhaps address unforeseen gaps/loopholes?

There are two schedules that have been placed in this 'house cleaning' bill that should not be there: Schedule 6 (regarding the Conservation Authority Act) and Schedule 8 (Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994). The changes the government is proposing are not just a small tinkering or tweaking to these Acts. The changes the government is asking for violate the purpose/reasoning behind why these Acts were crafted and made into law in the first place - the necessary protection of our Environment for today's and future generations.

For example, the Conservation Authority Act was created to ensure uniform 'treatment'/regulations of area watersheds. It was recognized that watersheds cross municipal/county/district boundaries. It recognized that allowing individual municipalities to set potentially conflicting regulations only led to gross mismanagement of this precious, life sustaining resource – water. This reality has not changed, uniform regulations continue to be the best way. In effect different regulations can and will result in gross mismanagement of our already gravely stressed environment.

It is despicable that the government is using the title of Bill 229 as a Trojan horse, appearing as a gift but really containing far reaching and destructive changes, as a way to quickly pass the bill before anyone realises the trick. It is a narrow and shortsighted 'vision' that emphasizes development today for the benefit of a few at the cost to others today, not to speak of future generations. The sad thing is that this government does not realize that the Environment, that Nature, is not the enemy standing in the way of development and progress but rather the base from which all our wealth comes and that if we undermine Nature we are, essentially, undermining ourselves.

If the title of this bill has any merit, Schedule 6 and 8 do not belong in Bill 229. During this pandemic, the people of Ontario have re-discovered the importance of being out in Nature and have learned to appreciate how essential it is for their wellbeing.

Title aside, the long and hard efforts that went into creating and shaping The Conservation Authority Act and The Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994 should not be hijacked by a trick meant to deceive. At a time where climate change threatens our very existence, the importance of protecting our Environment is even more imperative. Schedule 6 and Schedule 8 needs be removed from Bill 229 and any future bill. Not to do so, would be a gross negligence to the people of Ontario.

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