

Douglas, Julia

From: Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Sent: December 1, 2020 7:47 PM
To: Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Cc: Teng, Deborah
Subject: Webform submission: Submission of material 28436

Submitted on Tue, 12/01/2020 - 19:24

Application ID: 28436

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

Which deadline would you like to submit your written material for?

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

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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Paste submission

I am writing to request that Schedule 6 and Schedule 8 both be entirely withdrawn from Bill 229.

The majority of the amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act proposed in Schedule 6 are contradictory to the purpose of the Conservation Authorities Act and will not aid in preparing communities for the effects of climate change. I value conservation authorities for their ability to provide science-based input into planning decisions to ensure that communities are safe from flooding and natural hazards. The watershed approach of conservation authorities has been recognized as a gold standard for community planning and protection. Numerous experts have pointed out that several of the amendments proposed in Schedule 6 will reduce the powers and scope of conservation authorities, making it more difficult for them to fulfill their critical role in community planning. Thus, I request that Schedule 6 be removed from Bill 229.

The exemption of all forestry operations from mandates of the Endangered Species Act, as proposed in Schedule 8, is an all-out assault on endangered species and ecosystems in Ontario. We are now in the midst of a biodiversity crisis that has the capacity to threaten environmental, human and economic health on a catastrophic scale. Given this crisis, we should now be working to increase protections for vulnerable species, not strip them away. Thus, I request that Schedule 8 be removed in its entirety from Bill 229.

Finally, the fact that these two items were included in an omnibus budget bill suggests that the Ontario government has no interest in listening to its constituents, as this approach sidesteps opportunities for meaningful public consultation. Any substantive changes to environmental laws should only be made after extensive consultation with the public, who will feel the effects of these changes in the health of their communities. Sidestepping the public's right to consultation, as required by the Environmental Bill of Rights, by including changes in omnibus budget bills, is undemocratic and clearly demonstrates that this government has no interest in the values of the general public. I request that the government consider engaging in meaningful consultation with the public on future environmental matters.