

The protection of Ontario's forests, wetlands, and at risk species should be an essential priority for the Government of Ontario, yet the privatization of land development projects has become a more primary concern and is in no way critical to the province's ability to rehabilitate itself and its inhabitants from the hardships that COVID-19 has caused.

Land use planning decisions should not be left solely in the hands of the Government. While I can understand the Government faces tough choices to help our economy, we cannot risk the health of our watersheds and our biodiversity. When responding to the crises of today, we also need to consider the crises of tomorrow such as flooding, water quality, habitat loss, and species losses. Schedules 6 and 8 will negatively impact the ability to enforce current and essential environmental laws, remove legal safeguards for endangered species and their habitats, and effectively rollback the ability for conservation authorities to intervene on land use planning decisions.

Expediting this bill with the inclusion of Schedules 6 and 8 without proper consultation from conservation authorities and Indigenous leaders will set a dangerous precedent and impact future generations. I agree that it is certainly important to address and put in place a plan of action to assist the province in bouncing back from the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act and the Crown Forest Sustainability Act are not essential to Ontario's COVID-19 recovery strategy. Therefore, at this time, I respectfully ask that both Schedule 6 and Schedule 8 be removed from Bill 229 in their entirety.

Sincerely,

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