

Douglas, Julia

From: Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Sent: December 2, 2020 6:31 PM
To: Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Cc: Teng, Deborah
Subject: Webform submission: Submission of material 28931

Submitted on Wed, 12/02/2020 - 18:00

Application ID: 28931

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

Dr Mary Eleanor Yack

Paste submission

To whom it may concern,

I would like to voice my displeasure with the implications that Bill 229 has for our environment. As a psychiatrist concerned about mental health issues, I have been made more aware of the importance of the natural world and the local conservation areas for the maintenance of people's sense of wellbeing. I have been especially impressed with how young families are taking their children to conservation areas and enriching their experiences and lives through exploring these protected areas.

Research has shown that even an hour walk in a forest can improve the clinical symptoms of depression, which is relevant because of the deterioration of people's mental health brought on by the pandemic. As a psychiatrist, my strongest recommendation to my patients is to advise them to take walks in the quiet of nature. The areas managed by the Conservation Authorities are the most accessible places for them to find this solace.

The Province should be supporting and encouraging the important work of the Conservation Authorities, but the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act proposed in Schedule 6 do the opposite.

I am also asking that Schedule 8 be eliminated. I am concerned about how exempting forestry from the Endangered Species Act will threaten endangered species. The benefits of the natural world come not just from the spaces themselves, but also the surprise encounters with the animals that live within it. For this reason, protecting biodiversity and its soothing effects on the human spirit can also help protect mental health.

As a Province, we need to take a strong stand to protect the environment.

I request that Schedule 6 and Schedule 8 be removed in their entirety from Bill 229. My concern is that taking away the power of Conservation Authorities will threaten the sanctity of those protected areas, and that efforts to weaken environmental protection have harmful impacts beyond those on the environment.

Sincerely,
Mary Eleanor Yack, MD, FRCP(C)