

Douglas, Julia

From: Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Sent: December 2, 2020 6:09 PM
To: Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Cc: Teng, Deborah
Subject: Webform submission: Submission of material 28901

Submitted on Wed, 12/02/2020 - 17:48

Application ID: 28901

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

Ms Fatima Visram

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Paste submission

I am extremely concerned about the proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and Planning Act included within the Ontario government's budget bill (Bill 229, Schedule 6 and 8). The bill contains provisions,

requested by developers, that will allow the accelerated destruction of wetlands, forests, wildlife habitat and natural spaces that offer Ontarians solace and help protect us from the growing effects of climate change.

I am calling on you to work within your power to see that Schedule 6 and 8 is struck from Bill 229.

Schedule 6, if implemented, will:

Allow the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, his staff or a municipal government, to issue permits to allow for the destruction of important wetlands and forests and to override protections from flooding, therefore stripping the power of Conservation Authorities to protect these important features in their communities, and making Ontarians much more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. This new power could be used to push forward the MZO used to advance the destruction of the Duffins Creek provincially significant coastal wetland in Pickering over the clear objections of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Town of Ajax, the Chiefs of Ontario and thousands of Ontarians.

Legally prohibit Conservation Authority Board members from prioritizing the watershed management and protection goals of the authorities, and instead require them to think first of the narrower interests of the municipality they come from. This turns 75 years of planning on a watershed basis on its head, at a time when we need to plan better on that basis to protect our society from climate change.

Remove Conservation Authorities' ability to directly comment on the impacts of proposed developments to municipal governments. This will set integrated watershed management back decades and removes any control that Conservation Authorities have over the impact of proposed developments.

Remove the ability of Conservation Authorities to purchase, at fair market value, land that is at risk from development or flooding. This ability is what allowed the creation of large valley parkland complexes in Toronto after hurricane Hazel. Removing this ability as Ontario faces increased floods caused by climate change makes no sense.

Prohibit Conservation Authorities from appealing a municipal planning decision to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) or becoming a party to an appeal before LPAT. If passed, Conservation Authorities would not be able to participate in an LPAT appeal to represent their views about the need to protect natural features, unless they are requested through an agreement with the municipality, or by the Minister.

Introduce new rights for developers to force fast tracking of approvals and increased rights to appeal decisions they do not like, without providing the same opportunity to citizens who may wish to challenge decisions that damage the environment.

Schedule 8 if implemented will include a permanent exemption for forestry from protecting and recovering endangered species. If passed it would prevent the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks from ever issuing a species protection order or habitat protection order for any forest operations conducted as per the exemption.

We need forests to provide habitat for all of Ontario's rich biodiversity including its threatened wildlife like boreal caribou and Blanding's turtle. We don't want to see our forests converted into empty, tree farms. We also need healthy forests, especially the Boreal Forest, to help us stave off the worst impacts of climate. Intact boreal forests are one of the best natural solutions to climate.

In total, these changes will gut the purpose, goals and power to operate of Ontario's Conservation Authorities. These watershed based planning and protection bodies employ scientists, collect long term research data and carry out protection of our water, wildlife and safety. They are also the envy of jurisdictions around North

America. Established in 1946, they are key to halting flooding and protecting and restoring wetlands, forest and watersheds across the portion of Ontario where 85 percent of the province's residents live.

Narrow, profit-driven demands from regressive and selfish development interests should never be the driver for changes to organizations that are this important to the protection of Ontario's citizens and its environment.

I am asking you to remove Schedule 6 and 8 from Bill 229 before its passage.

Sincerely,

Fatima Visram