

ERO 019-9306

Expanding Protected Areas in Ontario – Additional Sites Proposed to be Regulated under the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006

Summary of Concern

I support Ontario's goal of expanding protected greenspace for its essential role in climate resilience, biodiversity, and public wellbeing. However, re-designating lands from stronger protection frameworks to provincial park status may unintentionally weaken long-term safeguards.

Some parcels, such as those proposed for addition to Algonquin Provincial Park are already protected under conservation reserve or Crown land designations managed for ecological integrity. While inclusion in a park may appear to strengthen protection, it can in some cases replace more restrictive measures with flexible provisions under the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act*. To prevent any net loss of protection, these lands must retain or exceed their current legal safeguards.

Examples such as Wasaga Provincial Park and North Gwillimbury Forest highlight the risk of inconsistent or reversible protections. Only clear legislation, transparent oversight, and the involvement of strong, independent conservation authorities can guarantee permanent conservation outcomes.

I therefore recommend:

- All lands removed from or reclassified under the Narrowed Area of Interest retain explicit, permanent legal protection.
- No reduction in existing conservation boundaries or ecological safeguards.
- Meaningful public participation at every stage.
- Restoration of Conservation Authority oversight in park and greenspace management.

Protecting nature must mean protecting it permanently.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]