

December 2025

Dear Minister McCarthy,

Re: The Species Conservation Act (SCA) under Bill 5: Protecting Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025

While Bill 5 and the new *Species Conservation Act* aim to speed up development, they risk weakening protections for species at risk and their habitats. Permits or registrations may replace science-based safeguards, reducing transparency and public oversight.

I urge the Ministry to reconsider and ensure strong, science-driven protections remain, require independent habitat mapping and monitoring, and keep all permits and registrations open to public review.

Protecting species is critical not only for Ontario's ecosystems, clean water, and long-term environmental health, but also for climate resilience. Healthy wetlands, forests, and grasslands store carbon, reduce flooding, and buffer communities from extreme weather. These are key to meeting Ontario's and Canada's net-zero commitments. Weakening species protection undermines both biodiversity and climate goals at a time when nature-based climate solutions are urgently needed.

Sources

1. *Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act*, S.C. 2021, c. 22. [Link: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-19.3/>]
2. Government of Canada, *Canada's 2030 Biodiversity Strategy: Nature Positive by 2030*, 2022. [Link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/biodiversity/strategy.html>]
3. *Endangered Species Act, 2007*, S.O. 2007, c. 6. [Link: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/07e06>]