

Provincial Bill 5 ‘Protect Ontario By Unleashing Our Economy Act’ and all 10 related Schedules and ERO notices.

Subject: Urgent Concerns About Ontario Provincial Bill 5

To: Premier Ford, Minister of Energy and Mining, MPP Lecce, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, MPP McCarthy, Minister of Indigenous Affairs, MPP Rickford, and Minister of Transportation, MPP Sarkaria.

Cc. Leader of the Opposition Marit Stiles, Opposition Critic Energy and Climate Action MPP Tabuns, Opposition Critic of Indigenous and Treaty Relations & Northern Development, MP Sol Mamakwa, Leader of the Green Party MPP Schreiner, and Interim Leader of the Liberal party, John Fraser.

Premier Ford and Ministers Lecce, Rickford and Sarkaria:

I’m writing as a concerned Ontarian who supports responsible growth but not at the expense of Indigenous rights, the environment, climate action, or democratic accountability.

We all want a thriving Ontario, and we must have ‘elbows up’ in the face of economic pressure from the U.S. But Bill 5, the *Protecting Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act*, raises serious red flags. It goes too far, too fast - drastically reducing public and scientific consultation, gutting protections for endangered species and the environment, sidelining Indigenous voices on issues that directly affect their lands and heritage, and will impact the climate crisis in a negative way despite the intent to provide the resources to support positive climate energy action.

Ontario should push for critical minerals, clean energy, active transit infrastructure, and green SEZs but it must include First Nations as equal partners—not silent observers. These priorities must not come at the cost of species extinction, the elimination of environmental assessments during the climate crisis, or stripping the public of legal recourse.

The Endangered Species Act and environmental assessments must not be replaced by the weaker Conservation Act. They must be strengthened, not sacrificed.

Though the act’s title implies economic protection, its contents reveal a different agenda - one that centralizes power, reduces oversight, and favors unchecked development over nature, rights, and accountability.

Alternatives for Sustainable Growth:

- **Fast-Track Low-Impact Projects:** Expedite approvals for developments that meet pre-approved environmental standards.
- **Green-Focused SEZs:** Designate zones for clean tech and sustainable innovation, with incentives tied to environmental performance.
- **Mandatory Indigenous and Community Consultation:** Require consultation for major projects, especially in SEZs and areas like Ontario Place.
- **Strengthen the Endangered Species Act:** Modernize with adaptive management and developer partnerships to protect habitats.
- **Expand Conservation Programs:** Support habitat restoration and community-led stewardship through public-private partnerships.
- **Clear Criteria for Exemptions:** Apply only to projects with net environmental benefit. Create a “green certification” for high-standard developers.
- **Public Project Dashboard:** Ensure real-time transparency on assessments, consultations, and project status.
- **Reform, Don’t Eliminate, Legal Appeals:** Improve access and transparency while preventing abuse, especially for cases affecting health or environmental justice.

I urge you to repeal Bill 5 / Protecting Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act . Reopen meaningful consultation with scientists, Indigenous communities, and the public. Let’s advance Ontario’s economy without sacrificing what makes this province worth protecting. With collaboration and care, we can build a future that leaves no voice or ecosystem behind and stands strong.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Address and Postal Code]

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