

Subject: Concern Regarding Bill C-15 and Ministerial Override Powers

Dear Ministers,

I am writing with serious concern about Bill C-15. While presented as a routine budget bill, it includes a provision that would allow federal ministers to exempt almost any project, product, or regulation from oversight if they believe it is “in the public interest.”

That should concern all Canadians.

Our environmental laws, health protections, labour standards, Indigenous consultation requirements, and nuclear safety rules exist for a reason. They ensure decisions are evidence-based, transparent, and accountable. Bill C-15 would allow a single minister to set aside many of these safeguards without clear criteria, independent review, or public justification.

We have seen similar “public interest” override language used in Ontario through Bills 23, 17, and 5, where oversight was reduced and decision-making power became more centralized. Bill C-15 risks bringing that same model to the federal level.

This matters. Projects like the proposed Wesleyville nuclear development, pipeline expansions, old-growth logging in B.C., Southern Resident killer whale recovery, caribou habitat protection, and the James Bay “Breathing Lands” all rely on strong federal oversight. So do Indigenous rights protected under section 35 of the Constitution and Canada’s commitments under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Rights are only meaningful if they cannot be set aside.

Democracy is built on clear limits, transparency, and accountability, especially when political or economic pressure is high. If flexibility is needed, it must be narrow, evidence-based, time-limited, and subject to real oversight.

I urge you to remove or substantially amend the override provisions in Bill C-15. The public interest is best protected by strong laws, not unchecked discretion.

Respectfully,