

Conservation E-Blast

2019-01-13

SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE



NATURALISTS

Bill 66 – Legislation Proposed by the Ford Ontario Government, introduced before the busy Christmas/New Year’s season.

SLSN members please write and submit personal letters to Premier Doug Ford, Caroline Mulroney MPP (York-Simcoe) and your local Mayor and Councillor(s) regarding proposed Bill 66, as soon as possible.

Paul Harpley SLSN

Premier Doug Ford – doug.fordco@pc.ola.org

MPP Caroline Mulroney (Attorney General) - caroline.mulroneyco@pc.ola.org

Mayor Quirk, Town of Georgia - mquirk@georgina.ca

Mayor Virginia Hackson – vhackson@eastgwillimbury.ca

Your local municipal Councillor (variable by geographic location – e-mails on internet).

And, phoning these individuals is also effective.

Paul Harpley, President SLSN

Note: January 20th is the Deadline for comments on Bill 66 through the Environmental Registry for Ontario (EBR) and personal letters and phone calls to politicians is even sooner! So, act quickly. Use any of the comments/detail in this e-blast.

You can access the E.B.R. to comment on Bill 66 at,

<https://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTM2NzI0&statusId=MjA4MzU1&language=en>

This past Saturday (2019-01-15) many citizens from across the Greater Golden Horseshoe gathered outside at Environment Minister Phillips office in Ajax in a major rally to against environmentally destructive Bill 66! Without a lot of notice, given the short

review/comment time frames of the government, a sizable demonstration/rally took place.



J. Kamstra photos

The proposed law will open the Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine, Lake Simcoe and source water protection areas to development

The provincial government introduced this destructive bill on December 6, 2018 just before the Legislature wrapped up proceedings until February 2019. From now until the Legislature returns, citizens will be calling on their MPPs to vote down this environmentally

destructive bill that will roll back many of the province's fundamental clean water and environmental protection laws.

Key individuals and Organizations active in the Ajax Rally and Demonstrations: Steve Parish, Former Town of Ajax Mayor; Colleen Jordan, Former Town of Ajax Deputy Mayor & Regional Councillor; David Suzuki Foundation, Earthroots, Environmental Defence, Grand River Environmental Network, Land Over Landings, Leadnow, Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, Toronto Environmental Alliance, and Wellington Water Watchers were available for interviews.

The simple message of WHY was:

Bill 66's three main threats to the province's environmental protections are:

1) **The Greenbelt** – Bill 66 opens up the Greenbelt to development putting our food security and natural areas at risk. It will encourage land speculation whereby developers will be able to buy up protected farmland and turn it into factories, retail stores or sprawling subdivisions.

2) **Clean water** - Bill 66 would allow developers to ignore the *Clean Water Act*, which was an important law passed after the Walkerton tragedy that claimed seven lives due to drinking water contamination. It also sidelines the *Lake Simcoe Protection Act* and *Great Lakes Protection Act*, putting the drinking water of millions of Ontarians at risk.

3) **Protections from toxic chemicals** - Bill 66 proposes to repeal the *Toxics Reduction Act*, a law that requires certain industrial facilities to consider ways to reduce the use and emissions of toxic chemicals in their operations. Repealing this Act will undermine the health of Ontarians.

Check the Live website <http://stopbill66.ca>

Bill 66: What more detailed things You Need to Know – Key Points from Ontario Nature

- 1. It affects every municipality in Ontario. Bill 66 allows municipalities across the province to create “open-for-business by-laws” that would trump critical legal requirements to protect water, natural heritage, farmland and human health and well-being. These bylaws would take precedence over municipal official plans.**
- 2. It threatens drinking water across Ontario. Open-for-business by-laws would override policies in approved source protection plans intended to protect existing and future sources of municipal drinking water from threats such as landfills, sewage systems and improper handling of fuel, manure and pesticides.**
- 3. It threatens wetlands, woodlands and habitat for species at risk across Ontario. Open-for-business by-laws would circumvent protections for these important habitats and species set out in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) under the Planning Act.**
- 4. It threatens farmland across Ontario. Open-for-business by-laws would bypass agricultural protections set out, for example, in the PPS. This could lead to more urban sprawl.**
- 5. It threatens two million acres of natural areas and farmland across the Greenbelt. Open-for-business by-laws would override protections for natural heritage and farmland set out in the Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.**
- 6. It threatens fresh water and the ecological health of the Lake Simcoe watershed. Open-for-business bylaws would trump requirements set out in the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan.**
- 7. It would undermine efforts to make Ontario communities more livable, sustainable and resilient. Open-for-business by-laws would override PPS policies**

supporting active transportation, affordable housing, green infrastructure and climate resiliency.

8. It would compromise transparency and public engagement. Contrary to current legal requirements (Planning Act, Clean Water Act), the by-laws could be passed without any prior public notice, behind closed doors.

9. It would leave citizens without recourse. Community members would not be able to appeal open-for-business by-laws to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal.

10. It threatens human and wildlife health through increased exposure to toxic chemicals. Bill 66 proposes to repeal the Toxics Reduction Act, which requires certain industrial facilities to consider ways to reduce the use and emission of toxic chemicals in their operations.

#StopBill66

Lawn signs are available to SLSN members for your property, from Environmental Defence.

Phone Paul Harpley e-mail me – paul@harpley.ca. Order now, they are going fast!

Protect Lake Simcoe – Stop Bill 66 *and* Protect the Greenbelt – Stop Bill 66



Also, Stop Bill 66 Buttons and Information Cards are available. E-mail me to get some. Act Fast.



SLSN Bill 66 Submission to Town of Georgina Council

Based on previous planning and natural heritage impact research and consultation with Ontario Nature, the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance, and legal consultation review from the Canadian Environmental Law Association and the

Environmental Defence Organization I have written a formal SLSN submission to the Mayor and Council of the Town of Georgina below. This is a formal development of concerns detailed in SLSN Conservation E-Blast, 2018-12-10 previously e-mailed to SLSN members.

Paul Harpley SLSN



SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

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Mayor Margaret Quirk and Council,
Town of Georgina
26557 Civic Centre Road, RR#2
Keswick, ON., L4P 3G1

2019-01-11

Re: Bill 66 – Ontario Provincial Government Proposed legislation

Recommendation: That the Mayor and Council of the Town of Georgina request that the Province of Ontario immediately abandon this legislation. And, implore that the Town of Georgina not use this Bill 66, should it be passed by the Ontario legislature.

Mayor and Council of the Town of Georgina:

The South Lake Simcoe Naturalists believe the Town of Georgina should be very concerned about Bill 66 proposed by the current Ontario Government that would give municipalities the a tool to override existing important natural and cultural heritage, environmental and health and safety existing legislation. The current Ontario government wrongly sees the current land-use planning process as impeding economic development, in support of jobs through a purported “open for business planning bylaw”.

From our review most of the Bill 66 proposed will roll back important aspects of existing legislation such as the Clean Water Act (adopted after the Walkerton tragedy), The Greenbelt Act, the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, Oak Ridges Moraine Act, Places to Grow Act (Growth Plan), etc. and is ill-conceived. The wide-ranging Omnibus nature of this legislation is truly concerning and obviously lacks balance and a full understanding of real on the ground land-use planning implications. A central concern is that this proposed Bill would allow municipalities to pass a by-law to place employment uses and secondary uses such as residential and commercial anywhere in Ontario without conforming to these important Acts, and indeed contravene their recent existing Official and Secondary Plans arrived at through extensive local community consultation and good planning process. We would obviously strongly disagree with this. Many other commentators, legal advisers and media and academics have detailed these serious flaws in this policy move and proposed Bill 66 including concerning municipal Zoning change implications. Also, there is lots of additional information and analysis easily available on the internet, including the detailed Bill 66 itself, which anyone can search. We implore Council members personally undertake their own review of this legislation and legal and academic review that are also available in the public domain (legal review - Aird & Berlis LLP, Stikeman Elliott LLP, C.E.L.A. etc.)

It is noted that no public notice or hearing is required prior to the passing of the open-for-business planning by-law proposed. From our inquiries, the provincial government is now advising that the fundamental powers and responsibilities regarding decisions approving development projects is with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This was historically the case, and from experience, will ultimately result in some cases further high-level legal fighting, and municipality representatives facing angry residents at the front line of controversial, scientifically and socially indefensible developments at their local neighbourhood level, by a municipality who would support this tool. Despite the Province calling it a planning tool to empower municipalities, it will force local public community members to act against their municipalities more than is presently the case. Ultimately, it is difficult to see how this local purported community-based decision making, further top-down directive driven is helpful. It is not, and a slippery slope “prescribed” based process, which none of us need.

The Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine Acts and Plans are established integral components of land use planning in Ontario that complement the Growth Plan to encourage smart planning in York Region. We want and need all our local municipalities (consistently across the Region (and the entire Southern Ontario landscape) to champion the priorities within the existing land-use planning process resulting in the reduction of sprawl, protection of natural and hydrological features and agricultural lands, and conservation of wildlife through the developing confirmed landscape ecology principles of existing policy and legislation at the local and provincial level.

Indeed, with this Bill 66 it would seem apparent employment uses could be built anywhere in the province without following our well-established public planning process in Ontario. This is poor planning! **Our members research, and our own knowledge of our local area and municipalities confirm that there is an excess of economic development land here, and in cities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, that have been identified for that use. There is no need for this legislation, the appropriate lands are already identified as we have previously advised, in existing approved municipal Official and Secondary Plans, including in Georgina.**

In our Region the Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine Act and Plan, the Lake Simcoe Protection Act and Plan, and Clean Water Act existing complete provisions, critical to the health of all our communities, and the wildlife we share with them, must not be undermined.

Regarding the Greenbelt in Ontario, it has protected 1.8 million acres of farmland, local food supplies, the headwaters of our rivers and important forests and wildlife habitat for over 12 years. We are advised that it generates 9.1 billion dollars in revenue each year, creating 161,000 local jobs across 28 municipalities. It ensures our food security by providing us with local food, encouraging young farmers to step in. Its continued clearly defined and defensible boundaries must not be tampered with, for clarity for developers and all the people, wildlife and natural and cultural landscapes of Ontario.

We broadly ask that municipalities, upon review especially of Schedule 10 of Bill 66, to stand with us and many others opposing this proposed Bill 66. We are advised that other municipalities are already doing this, Guelph, Burlington and Halton Hill among others. As many other individuals and organizations have noted our communities are not “red tape”. Similarly, our wildlife, rivers and streams, local food security and the future health and well-being of our children is also not simply red tape. The provisions of existing Ontario Land-use planning and zoning are there for good reason.

Many of our SLSN members are small business people themselves, professionals and others, and are involved in community organizations, and active in social, cultural and natural heritage organizations in our municipalities. **At the end of the day, it is up to the local municipality representatives to speak up for their citizens for good, rigorous and open planning process. We thereby request the Mayor and Council of the Town of Georgina act decisively now to request the Province of Ontario immediately abandon this proposed legislation. And, we implore that you not use this proposed provincial Bill 66 in the Town of Georgina, should it be passed in the Ontario legislature. We request formal notification of any actions taken by Council regarding the proposed Bill 66.**

Paul Harpley BSc. (Hons.) M.A.

President, South Lake Simcoe Naturalists (Ontario Nature)

Director, The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe Research Organization

c.c. John Espinosa, Clerk, Town of Georgina
Ontario Nature
Canadian Environmental Law Association
Environmental Defence
Ontario Greenbelt Alliance
Lake Simcoe Watch
Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition
Other Conservation Partners

Legal opinion on Bill 66 for Reference and Background– and Schedule 10 of the proposed legislation.

Legal explanations and Comment from key Legal firms

Canadian Environmental Law Association:

<https://www.cela.ca/publications/legal-analysis-schedule10-ONBill66>

Stikeman Elliott LLP – Legal Firm

https://www.stikeman.com/en-ca/kh/real-estate-municipal/Major-Changes-to-Zoning-Law-Proposed-in-Ontarios-Bill-66?utm_source=Mondaq&utm_medium=syndication&utm_campaign=View-Original

Aird and Berlis:

<https://www.airdberlis.com/insights/publications/publication/government-of-ontario-announces-proposed-changes-to-the-planning-act>

Ontario Nature Recent Final Information for Public Comment reference

2019-01-14

Important deadlines that you should be aware of:

- **January 20th**: Deadline for comments on Bill 66 through the Environmental Registry for Ontario (ERO postings were previously referred to as EBR postings).
- Bill 66 is on the order paper for second reading on **February 19th** when the Legislature returns.
- After passing second reading, Bill 66 goes to committee. So, the anticipated third reading and **passage of the Bill is early March.**

1. Read and distribute our blog posting which explains the very serious environmental implications of Bill 66: What You Need to Know (<https://ontarionature.org/bill-66-facts/>). When distributing the blog, please ask people to sign the online letter that is being sent to Premier Ford, Todd Smith (Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade) who introduced the Bill, Steve Clark (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing) and Rod Phillips (Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks) and to share with their networks. Attached at the website is access to a PDF flyer of *Bill 66: What You Need to Know* that you can print out and share at meetings. Please consider posting our blog on your Facebook page. You can do this logging onto your Facebook page and then clicking on the Facebook icon at the end of our blog.
2. Read our attached draft comments on Bill 66 and use them to make a submission for your organization in response to EBR Registry Number 013-4293 posted on the ERO website (<http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTM2NzI0&statusId=MjA4MzU1&language=en>). You are welcome to use Ontario Nature's comments in their entirety or draw from them.

Ontario Nature E.B.R. Submission for information and Reference for SLSN members letters!

Michael Helfinger
Senior Policy Advisor
Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
Business Climate and Funding Administration Division
Policy Coordination and Business Climate Branch
900 Bay Street, Hearst Block 7th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2E1

Dear Mr. Helfinger,

RE: 013-4293 Bill 66: Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018; 013-4125 Proposed open-for-business planning tool; 013-4239 New Regulation under the Planning Act for open-for-business planning tool

We, the undersigned organizations, strongly oppose several aspects of Bill 66, *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018*. We disagree with the Government of Ontario's contention that Bill 66 cuts "unnecessary" and "out of date" regulations (ERO posting 013-4293). This is patently not true in the case of Schedule 10 which introduces "open-for-business by-laws" that would trump critical requirements under several laws that are designed to protect water, natural heritage and human health and well-being and to ensure fair, consistent and transparent public engagement in land-use decisions.

We outline our concerns below and trust that they will be considered with respect to all three relevant ERO postings (i.e., 013-4293, 013-4125, 013-4239).

Open-for-business by-laws would circumvent fundamental protections for environmental and human health.

The Government of Ontario claims that Bill 66 will "make Ontario more competitive by cutting unnecessary regulations that are inefficient, inflexible or out of date" (ERO 013-4293). To this end it intends to allow municipalities to pass open-for-business by-laws so that they can permit land-uses "without having to strictly adhere to existing local requirements (e.g., official plan and zoning)" (ERO 013-4125). Both government statements are misleading. The laws, plans and policies that will be sidestepped through open-for-business by-laws are neither unnecessary nor out of date. Nor are they simply "local requirements." As outlined in the table below, open-for-business by-laws would override requirements to be consistent with many of Ontario's key planning laws and policies recently passed or updated with extensive public consultation.

Key requirements that will be overridden in seven of the ten laws listed in Schedule 10

Law listed under Schedule 10 of Bill 66	Requirements that would not apply to an open-for-business by-law	Timing of the passing or most recent revision of specific law, plan or policy
<i>Planning Act</i> , Subsection 3 (5)	This section requires the decisions of municipalities and others (boards, ministers, government agencies) to be consistent with policy statements and provincial plans. This includes Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) requirements regarding natural heritage protection, water features protection, active transportation, climate resiliency etc.	The Provincial Policy Statement was revised in 2014 following five years of in-depth public consultation.
<i>Planning Act</i> , Section 24	This section requires public works and by-laws to be consistent with municipal official plans.	Municipal official plans are to be reviewed at least every five years, with community

		consultation.
<i>Planning Act</i> , Subsections 34 (10.0.0.1) to (34)	These subsections set out requirements for public engagement in order to amend a zoning by-law, including public notice, public consultation and opportunities for appeal.	
<i>Clean Water Act, 2006</i> , Section 39	This section requires land-use planning decisions (municipal, provincial and others) to conform to the significant threat policies and Great Lakes policies adopted in approved source protection plans intended to protect existing and future sources of municipal drinking water. It also requires public works, municipal by-laws and provincial approvals to be consistent with the significant threat policies.	Since the law came into effect in 2007, communities across Ontario have been developing source protection plans, with public input required.
<i>Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015</i> , Section 20	This section requires planning decisions to conform with designated policies in “geographically focused initiatives,” a tool that allows communities to solve complex problems to protect or restore the ecological health of the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River basin.	The law was passed in October 2015.
<i>Greenbelt Act, 2005</i> , section 7	This section requires that planning decisions conform to the Greenbelt Plan and prohibits by-laws to be passed that conflict with the Greenbelt Plan.	The Greenbelt Plan was amended in 2017, after extensive public consultation.
<i>Lake Simcoe Protection Act, 2008</i> , Section 6	This section requires that planning decisions conform with designated policies of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan. It requires that in cases where policies in the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan conflict with other provincial plans or policies, that which provides the greatest level of protection for the ecological health of the Lake Simcoe watershed will prevail.	The law was passed in 2008.
<i>Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001</i> , section 7	This section requires that planning decisions conform with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan	The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan

	and prohibits by-laws to be passed that conflict with the plan.	was amended in 2017, after extensive public consultation.
<i>Places to Grow Act</i> , 2005, Subsection 14 (1)	This section requires that planning decisions comply with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario.	The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was amended in 2017, after extensive public consultation.

The potential negative impact of open-for-business by-laws is far-reaching and profound. In each case they would override key operative provisions in the laws listed in Schedule 10, undermining fair and consistent application of laws and policies designed to protect drinking water, natural heritage, farmland and watershed health across Ontario, and leaving communities open to unchecked development. For example, policies that would not apply in open-for-business by-law areas include:

- Those addressing significant threats to municipal drinking water (e.g., landfills, sewage systems, and the storage or handling of fuel, fertilizers, manure, pesticides, road salt, organic solvents and other substances on lands near wells or surface water intake pipes used by municipal drinking water systems);
- Those protecting provincially significant wetlands, woodlands and valley lands and habitat of species at risk;
- Those supporting active transportation, affordable housing, green infrastructure and climate resiliency;
- Those protecting key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features, natural core areas and natural linkage areas across the Oak Ridges Moraine;
- Those protecting two-million acres of natural areas and farmland across the Greenbelt;
- Those protecting fresh water and the ecological health of the Lake Simcoe watershed;
- Those supporting smart, integrated, long-term planning for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, a heavily developed region facing intense development pressures.

These and other outcomes of Bill 66 would run contrary to interests and desires of the people of Ontario: a 2016 Nanos poll found that 90 percent of Ontarians believe the government is responsible to ensure a healthy environment for all, and 97 percent support the right to clean air and water.

Open-for-business by-laws would eliminate opportunities for public input on planning decisions.

Under the guise of cutting red tape, open-for-business by-laws would bypass legal requirements (*Planning Act, Clean Water Act*) designed to ensure fair, consistent and transparent public engagement with land-use decisions in our communities. Open-for-business by-laws could be passed without any prior public notice or meetings and could

not be appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal. In other words, by-laws passed behind closed doors would trump laws, policies and municipal official plans developed through extensive and open public consultation. Communities would have no recourse to influence or challenge them.

Further, Bill 66 would allow Cabinet (not the Legislature) to add other legal provisions to the list of those in Schedule 10 to be circumvented by open-for-business by-laws, an approach which limits opportunities for transparent public consideration and debate.

Finally, we question whether there is demand from municipalities for open-for-business by-laws, ostensibly proposed by the government to make more employment lands available. At the Growth Plan implementation consultation held on November 8, 2018 at Queen's Park many municipalities indicated that they have a surplus of employment lands and would like to see these repurposed for residential. Since the introduction of Bill 66, many municipal leaders (e.g., in Guelph, Aurora, Burlington, Barrie, Oakville, Hamilton, Toronto) have expressed serious concerns about open-for-business by-laws and the circumvention of laws that protect drinking water, farmlands and natural areas and ensure public input and transparency in decision-making.

Concluding remarks

From Kenora to Toronto and Ottawa to Windsor, Schedule 10 of Bill 66 would turn back the clock on many years of good planning, community input and strong leadership from governments of all political stripes. Open-for-business by-laws would sidestep laws and policies intended to protect the long-term health and resilience of our communities and would facilitate sprawling and unchecked development, threatening sensitive natural features and water resources upon which we all rely. Bill 66 would undermine everything we have learned – sometimes under tragic circumstances – about how to protect our environment and the health of our communities. Ontarians do not want another disaster like Walkerton, when over 2,000 people fell ill and seven died as a result of a failure to safeguard the local water system. Environmental deregulation, budget cuts and staffing reductions were all identified as major contributing factors in that tragedy.

We urge the government to avoid similar mistakes and to remove Schedule 10 from Bill 66.

Yours truly,

Caroline Schultz
Executive Director

cc. Premier Doug Ford

Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Todd Smith
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Steve Clark
Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Rod Phillips
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, John Yakabuski

Attorney General, Caroline Mulroney
Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, Dianne Saxe

York Region Media - Article on Bill 66

2019-01-14

https://www.yorkregion.com/opinion-story/9117952-bill-66-a-danger-to-the-environment-and-our-health/?source=newsletter&utm_source=ml_nl&utm_medium=email&utm_email=6ea0e815b8ffe40a55c58c2297de34c8&utm_campaign=yrop_43981&utm_content=a01

YorkRegion.com <newsletters@metroland.com>

Bill 66 — A danger to the environment and our health

Proposed law could bypass provincial legislation protecting Greenbelt, water and more, writes Beverley Golden

Opinion Jan 09, 2019 by Beverley Golden Thornhill Liberal



Beverley Golden is a writer, storyteller, peacenik, and animal and environmental rights advocate. Check out her best-selling book, Confessions of a Middle-Aged Hippie, and visit her on www.beverleygolden.com. June 4, 2018 - Denise Grant photo

Have you heard about the proposed bill that could endanger our health by putting the environment at risk?

Bill 66, tabled by the Ontario Conservatives, is called “Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness” Act and would cut the ‘red tape’ around planning approvals for developers wanting to invest in local communities.

The bill includes a myriad of issues, but most pressing for those who care about the environment is how it will circumvent legislation protecting the Greenbelt, Great Lakes and other environmentally sensitive areas. The bill is set to be debated in early 2019, after being introduced without any public consultation or warning.

What's at Risk with Bill 66?

What's at risk? When it comes to the Greenbelt — a lot! It's home to farmland, forests, watersheds and wetlands, a beautiful pristine green space that sustains life and is one of the largest greenbelts in the world. Maybe you've enjoyed a hike through its many trails and marvelled at its lush diversity.

The Greenbelt is also economically important, providing \$3.2B annually in services to the region. Services like recreational activities, flood protection, as well as groundwater recharge for drinking water. In fact, the Oak Ridges Moraine, (which lies in the Greenbelt), is an important drinking water source.

The Greenbelt was created in 2005 to deliberately limit the rapid urban sprawl that was encroaching on land that is both environmentally and economically significant. Bill 66 could end that if it passes!

Bill 66, Climate and Our Health

When it comes to climate change, the Greenbelt has the capacity to store as much carbon dioxide as would be emitted by 33 million cars a year! If we interfere with that crucial ecosystem, we're missing out on a chance to reduce our emissions and meet climate targets.

Perhaps most dangerous of all, is that Bill 66 exempts developers from rules that are crucial to protecting human health. Most notably, it undermines the Clean Water Act, which protects people from tragedies like the one that happened in Walkerton, where water contamination led to 7 deaths and thousands of cases of severe illness. Bill 66 threatens vital water sources for Ontarian's, including Lake Simcoe and the Great Lakes. It also repeals the Toxics Reduction Act meant to reduce pollution by preventing industrial uses of certain toxic chemicals.

How Can We Stop Bill 66?

According to a 2016 Nanos poll, 9 out of 10 Ontarian's believe the province has a responsibility to ensure a healthy environment for all. By threatening both air and water quality, Bill 66 clearly violates our right to a healthy environment.

How can you help? Contact your MPP and municipal councillor and let them know you oppose any bill that would potentially endanger our air and water. The provincial government has posted Bill 66 on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) site where you can comment until January 20, 2019!

You can also join the Blue Dot movement at BlueDot.ca. Blue Dot is a national grassroots campaign based on the ideal that everyone in Canada deserves the right to a healthy environment, including clean air and water, and a say in decisions that affect our health and well-being.

With the impending passage of Bill 66, it's more important than ever to make our voices heard and to demand that the right to a healthy environment becomes law!

*—Beverley Golden is a writer, storyteller, peacenik, and animal and environmental rights advocate. Check out her bestselling book, *Confessions of a Middle-Aged Hippie*, and visit her on www.beverleygolden.com.*
