

Conservation Alert E-Blast

2022-11-07

SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

SLSN members, find information on two related important Provincial Government actions unfolding in Ontario at this time. The Ford Government has brought forward a series of controversial proposed Growth Plan Amendments to the previous, recently approved Growth Plan for Ontario that will have grave impacts on the approved Greenbelt and protected countryside. These changes affect many complicated and interrelated Policy and detailed design, natural and agricultural landuse, cultural heritage, and areas of long-term past good planning methodology. Their Bill 23 that they have recently introduced, is legislation they are pushing to pass at Queen's Park within days.

As this omnibus Bill 23, "More Homes Built Faster Act" situation spiralled through the environmental, political, academic and legal community this past week, I searched through pages and pages of proposed changes to municipalities, conservation authorities, provincial ministries, public boards and commissions, responsibilities and value of decision capability, environmental policy and regulation, and planning minutia. I had an unsettled feeling from past experience, of an old "dirty politician trick" in the making and, lo and behold, at the end of the day this past Friday November 4th, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Mr. Clark introduced another announcement. Regrettably, plans to 'open up' 7,400 acres of currently protected Greenbelt land for developers to build 50,000 homes in exchange for adding 9,400 acres to other areas of the two-million-acre swath of environmentally sensitive land, including a natural heritage/agricultural area between and connecting the Rouge and Duffin's Creek watersheds in the protected countryside draining

off the Oak Ridges Moraine, only one example of many enforced political decisions imposed!

The news apparently came as a surprise to many since the government promised just last year (and not indicating any change before the recent Provincial Election campaign) it wouldn't "entertain any conversations about a land swap." But, from past experience over 40 years, with the province imposing a direction to further service York and Durham development with massive increasing servicing through opening up more sewage movement from the north down through the Oak Ridges Moraine to Pickering into Lake Ontario, I knew this would drive this unbridled development move, and more unprecedented environmental impact. Both these actions characterized by some as political "Bait and Switch" are rushed, in a complicated and defensible Greenbelt planning and implemented process that originally happened over decades in South Lake Simcoe and south, including considerable input by the South Lake Simcoe Naturalists in past years (presentations, meetings and documents).

These kinds of political tactics; unilateral contradictory and hustled actions are not typically practiced in Ontario or generally in the rest of Canada, and should not be condoned, and need to be vigorously resisted immediately! Top-down policy and regulation change at this scale with minimal consultation is deplorable, not good planning and just plain unjustifiable! The future of our nature, wildlife, quality of life, and future conservation of natural and cultural heritage hangs in the balance.

These two pre-emptive and very serious, in fact disastrous, deeds by the current Government of Ontario can only be characterized as a dreadful, irresponsible, and infuriating harassment to naturalists and many others in the broad Ontario community and beyond. Indeed, the Ontario societal reaction has been swift and hard-hitting, and I have included below some other worthy short information pieces, ideas, details, further information sources and, links for members to take action. **Please, act now!**

In the next few days review the information below and follow-up with comment to politicians. Most specifically submit comments to the Ontario Government directly, to the Environmental Registry – you can also easily search portals on-line. And, write your M.P.P., for most of you Caroline Mulroney, and other members in Brock, Durham and beyond those area M.P.P.'s. Demand that they vote not to pass these two pieces of legislation. If you use pre-presented organization letters they are easy to do, but know that their impact is generally known to be nominal. In my experience real change is driven by personal crafted letters, phone calls, meetings etc. to politicians, and other direct informed means that you can craft yourself from your own research. In past instances this original action make a real impact and difference (especially now with the massive use of social media by everyone for every cause or interest imaginable) and take time and effort, and it must come from many people. Advise your friends and family members to act, not representing any organization can speak volumes to politicians.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing and Premier Ford should most certainly feel the heat with your concerns. Regional and Municipal politicians must be taking immediate action, as should municipal and provincial and municipal level senior bureaucrats provide blow-back to their political taskmasters. Canada's reputation around the world from my academic travels over decades is known historically as a country having strong public service professionals, who in my experience in recent years have not been very apparent.

I will be doing what I can myself, but it needs to take everyone we can inspire. We will continue to be watching! This is always a long process. I always remind colleagues it took over 35 years, with many set-backs, for the little Save the Rouge organization to indispensably help get a critically important place in Canada as a new National Park, a place that still needs to be watched carefully.

The documents below provide immediate and easy ways to respond.

Paul Harpley SLSN

2022-11-05

Toronto Star

ENVIRONMENT

Why did Ontario backtrack on its Greenbelt pledge?

The Ontario government announced plans Friday to open up 7,400 acres of protected Greenbelt land for developers to build 50,000 homes in exchange for adding 9,400 acres to other areas of the two-million-acre swath of environmentally sensitive land. The news came as a surprise to many, since the government promised just last year it wouldn't "entertain any conversations about a land swap." Robert Benzie, Noor Javed and Tess Kalinowski report on the government's plans for the Greenbelt, and [why one politician believes this will put more protected land in jeopardy](#).

https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2022/11/04/ontario-backtracks-on-greenbelt-pledge-with-plan-to-allow-housing-on-7400-acres.html?source=newsletter&utm_source=ts_nl&utm_medium=email&utm_email=6EA0E815B8FFE40A55C58C2297DE34C8&utm_campaign=frst_152522

2022-11-02

Yours to Protect - 50by30WR Team Waterloo Region

With the failure of federal and provincial governments to act as if we are in a climate emergency, climate concerned citizens across Ontario have worked hard to put climate action on campaign agendas during this municipal election and to support candidates who understand why urgent climate action is critical to addressing affordability, homelessness and mental health issues amongst others. The work we have done must not be wiped out with this one complex omnibus bill that threatens to remove many of the powers of conservation authorities and municipal governments. And the limits and burdens on those who wish to appeal is anti-democratic.

Please join us, bring others and share broadly through social media and your networks. Please sign up for our 50by30WR newsletter for more resources on Bill 23, a letter to send to your MPP and petitions to sign.

For more information

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HDijNVeGbWHv9xKQQ0RfZ9iHPfcpaLLIfTBJ0sCKrY/edit?usp=sharing>

2022-10-31

Yours to Protect – Environmental Community Response

What is Bill 23?

On October 25, 2022, Bill 23 (the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022) was introduced in the provincial legislature. It is part of the government's Housing Supply Action Plan released in March 2022 with the goal to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. Bill 23 is an omnibus bill which overhauls development statutes, including the Planning Act, Development Charges Act, Ontario Heritage Act, and Conservation Authorities Act.

What is the rush?

Planning lawyers and specialists across the province are digging into this complex legislation to understand its meaning and impacts. But the government intends to push the bill through at a lightning pace. Introduced the day after municipal elections and before new councils are sworn in and oriented to their roles, the government will vote after second reading today and third reading may be complete before the end of this week. This speed means we, citizens, need to power through to understand the information that the lawyers and subject experts are sharing now.

Invitation to join a webinar

Learn more about Bill 23 - implications for renters, housing affordability, energy cost and use, taxation, 15-minute communities, prime farmland, risk of flooding, endangered species, sensitive ecosystems, nature-based solutions to climate change and more.

Register to join one or more of 3 virtual meetings that 50by30WR is offering province-wide: **3 meetings for you to stay up-to-date on what Bill 23 means to organizations, municipalities, and people across the province, as well as an opportunity to mobilize action.**

[Wednesday, Nov 2, 12:00 - 2:00 pm](#)

[Friday, Nov 4, 6:30 - 9:00 pm](#)

[Tuesday, Nov 8, 6:30 - 9:00 pm](#)

What do we hope you will do? Bring your questions, concerns, expertise. Organizations will have an opportunity to share their ideas and plans for feedback and community action.

Why is this issue important?

Before the conservative party elected Doug Ford as leader, he held a secret meeting with developers promising to open up the Greenbelt. The public uproar that ensued forced him to back down and promise to protect the Greenbelt. What is happening now is a betrayal of that

promise. The changes that will result from this Bill 23 were not presented for debate during the provincial election and are being pushed through now at a time when municipal leaders are newly elected and not in a position to respond. So, it is up to us to raise our voices:

- to protect the growing numbers of working poor,
- to demand truth and reconciliation for our indigenous neighbours
- to give hope to young families and elders for stable affordable housing
- to ensure productive farmland and food sovereignty
- to create a safe livable future for our children

With the failure of federal and provincial governments to act as if we are in a climate emergency, climate concerned citizens across Ontario have worked hard to put climate action on campaign agendas during this municipal election and to support candidates who understand why urgent climate action is critical to addressing affordability, homelessness and mental health issues amongst others. The work we have done must not be wiped out with this one complex omnibus bill that threatens to remove many of the powers of conservation authorities and municipal governments. And the limits and burdens on those who wish to appeal is anti-democratic.

Please join us, bring others and share broadly through social media and your networks. Please sign up for our 50by30WR newsletter for more resources on Bill 23, a letter to send to your MPP and petitions to sign.

For more information

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HDijNVeGbWHv9xKQQ0RfZ9iHPrfcpaLLIfTBJ0sCKrY/edit?usp=sharing>

50by30WR Team

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/why-you-should-be-concerned-about-bill-23-more-homes-built-faster-act1st-tickets-456163385967>

Environmental Defence

The Ontario Government is trying to force another omnibus bill through the legislature before Christmas. They're calling it the More Housing Built Faster Act, but in reality it's a **More Sprawl, Fewer Wetlands Act**.

BILL 23 WILL:

- Direct conservation authorities to sell off conservation lands

- Strip conservation authority powers which protect us from floods
- Remove protections from woodlands, wetlands and wildlife habitat¹
- Cancel municipal green building standards
- Impose farm-eating sprawl on municipalities like Hamilton, Halton and Waterloo that chose to build more homes within city limits

Luckily, there's still time to demand that your MPP votes against this destructive bill as it is currently written.

TAKE ACTION

We've been here before with Bill 66.

In 2018, when the Ontario Government tried to sneak an attack on the Greenbelt into legislation about "Restoring Competitiveness," tens of thousands of people just like you contacted their MPPs. **The government backed down and abandoned their attack on the Greenbelt.**

Now we need to [raise our voices once again to stop this new attack on liveable communities and their woodlands, wetlands and conservation areas.](#)

Our license plates say 'Yours to Discover', but Ontario is also 'Yours to Protect.'

In Solidarity,

Tim Gray
Executive Director

PS - Bill 23 contains too many attacks on our environment to cover in a single email, but if you would like to better understand this complex policy and legislation package please [register for our webinar on Monday, November 7th at 12:00 PM](#) or read [this detailed analysis](#).

1. The changes to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System are policy changes which will be debated and finalized separately. More here: <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-6160>, <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-6161>, <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-2927>.

Environmental Defence – Letter to MMP C. Mulroney regarding not voting for Bill 23

Tim Gray <yourstoprotect@environmentaldefence.ca>

Bill 23 is a direct attack on woodlands and wetlands.

[Click here](#) to view in your browser

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page20926.aspx>

<http://www.woodbull.ca/resources/wood-bull-blog/2019/01/15/province-proposes-draft-amendment-to-the-growth-plan>

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2019/01/16/planning-experts-warn-ontarios-growth-plan-changes-could-worsen-traffic-congestion.html>

2022-11-01

Toronto Star



Does Doug Ford’s housing bill cut natural disaster protections? [GTA mayors are asking to “pause” and sort it out.](#)

https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2022/10/28/does-doug-fords-new-housing-bill-cut-natural-disaster-protections-for-developments-gta-mayors-ask-for-pause-to-sort-out-plan.html?source=newsletter&utm_source=ts_nl&utm_medium=email&utm_email=6EA0E815B8FFE40A55C58C2297DE34C8&utm_campaign=first_151875

GTA

Does Doug Ford’s new housing bill cut natural disaster protections for developments? GTA mayors ask for ‘pause’ to sort out plan

Mayors of Oakville, Milton and Burlington have asked the province to temporarily halt parts of Doug Ford's new housing bill.

By [Noor Javed](#) Staff Reporter

Mon., Oct. 31, 2022 timer 5 min. read

Homeowners in Ontario could face greater risk from natural disasters like flooding and erosion under the province's new housing bill, which removes environmental oversight at key stages in the planning of new developments, conservation authorities say.

But the province says the "core mandate" of the authorities to warn about flooding and erosion hazards hasn't changed.

Meanwhile, some GTA mayors are asking for a "pause" on the new bill to sort out the apparent confusion.

As part of its omnibus housing bill, which is intended to spur construction and help address the housing shortage, the province also unveiled changes last week to the Conservation Authorities Act.

The legislation appears to limit what the province's 36 conservation authorities can offer their expertise on and their role in the planning process.

"It seems like they are trying to stop us from commenting on municipal planning applications altogether," said John MacKenzie, the chief executive officer of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA).

"If the government is successful in removing TRCA from these processes, this substantially increases the risk that development decisions will be made that put the lives of Ontarians, their properties, and critical infrastructure at risk, including new housing proposals in flood vulnerable areas."

On Monday, the mayors of Oakville, Milton and Burlington sent a letter to the province, asking the province to temporarily halt the implementation of parts of the housing bill, in order to clarify what exactly they will mean for environmental protection and oversight.

"We believe it is critical that the government presses pause on the proposed changes ... and meet with us to clarify and consider more effective alternatives," wrote the mayors who are also on the board for Conservation Halton.

In the past, in addition to flood assessment, conservation authorities would offer expertise on a host of topics including: ecology, wetlands, biodiversity, or natural heritage for a new project — if there was an agreement between the municipality and conservation authority. This would happen early in the planning process and could result in strategies to reduce impacts to the environment.

But the changes to the legislation introduced last week appear to suggest a conservation authority's input would only be required once much of the work on a development has already been done. And a municipality wouldn't be allowed to enter into such an agreement with a conservation authority — even if it wanted to.

"The way the legislation is currently written, we would only be coming in at the end to look at the flood plain," said Angela Coleman, general manager of Conservation Ontario. "How do you look at the flood plain if you are looking at just one project on its own, and not looking at anything upstream or downstream?"

The province, meanwhile, says the authorities will still be able to "comment on development proposals to reduce the potential risks from natural hazards like flooding and erosion."

"The changes proposed by our government will focus conservation authorities on their intended purpose to protect people and property from the impacts of natural hazards," said Richard Mullins, a spokesperson for Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

The province says that "municipalities will continue to be able to work with their local conservation authorities to develop and deliver local natural resource programs and services to respond to local needs and priorities."

This is the second time Doug Ford's government has sought to curtail the role of conservation authorities in the planning process.

Among the changes brought in 2020 was removing the ability of conservation authorities to weigh in on every application. Instead, a municipality would have to sign a deal with a local authority if it required additional environmental expertise on a project.

Without the staff or the budget for in-house environmental experts, all of the GTA's municipalities have entered into agreements with TRCA to provide these services, said MacKenzie.

Soon after, the province formed a working group with conservation authorities, stakeholders and municipalities to address many of the goals reintroduced in last week's legislation, including "mandate creep," said Hassaan Basit, CEO of Conservation Halton.

The new regulations they developed over the past two years were introduced this March, which makes the further restrictions in the new bill hard to comprehend, he said.

"I'm confused because we were allies, and we delivered transformative change, and we helped the government go in the direction they wanted us to," said Basit, who was the chair of the working group. "This time around, we weren't engaged at all."

The province has also asked the conservation authorities to "identify conservation authority owned or controlled lands that could support housing development."

According to the province, conservation authorities own 145,000 hectares of land, making them the second-largest landowner in Ontario after the province.

But Basit says that conservation authorities had already been making an inventory as one of the requirements of the working group.

Does that mean a development in the future could potentially be built on a wetlands or a forest?

“I sure hope not,” said MacKenzie. “Most of our real estate portfolio has been acquired for flood protection purpose, or conservation purposes. While there may be a few limited opportunities ... most of our portfolio is environmentally sensitive.”

The legislation will require conservation authorities to issue permits for projects approved under the new “community infrastructure and housing accelerator,” which expedites development if requested by a municipality — and allows the province to review and amend any conditions attached to those permits.

MacKenzie says despite what it may seem like in the province’s bill, the conservation authorities are not the holdup in the development process. He said that authorities already have to report metrics on how long it takes to issue a permit, and the majority of them have been “performing well.”

MacKenzie said that TRCA issues more than a thousand permits every year, and works closely with the developers and municipalities to make sure there is no unnecessary delay.

Among such projects where its expertise has been crucial is in helping to “flood-protect and enable redevelopment of mixed-use communities in flood-vulnerable areas of the GTA including the Toronto Waterfront and Lower Don Lands.”

“We have been able to mitigate so much damage through the work of the TRCA with other partners. Why destroy something that’s working?”

[Noor Javed](#) is a Toronto-based reporter for the Star covering city news with interest in 905 municipal politics. Follow her on Twitter: [@njaved](#)

Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

Bill 23

[Bill 23, "More Homes Built Faster Act" \(2022\)](#) is "an Act to amend various statutes, to revoke various regulations and to enact the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022 ([Ontario, 2022](#)). The province claims that Bill 23 has been put in place to

tackle the housing shortage in light of the massive population growth projected over the next decade. However, the fine print reveals numerous amendments to regulations that will exacerbate sprawl, destroy the environment, and worsen affordability.

Here are just a few of the major items we are concerned about...

[Bill 23, "More Homes Built Faster Act" \(2022\)](#) is "an Act to amend various statutes, to revoke various regulations and to enact the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022 ([Ontario, 2022](#)). The province claims that Bill 23 has been put in place to tackle the housing shortage in light of the massive population growth projected over the next decade. However, the fine print reveals numerous amendments to regulations that will exacerbate sprawl, destroy the environment, and worsen affordability.

Here are just a few of the major items we are concerned about...

SCHEDULE 2 CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT

- **CA's will lose their power to mitigate pollution and environmental damage caused by development.** CA's will only be allowed to comment on items under their core mandate, like natural hazards, and will not be allowed to prohibit certain activities that pollute ecosystems or destroy wildlife habitat
- **CA's will not be able to alter or deny certain development projects that might interrupt the quality and function of key ecosystems.** The process to obtain permits and zoning orders will be much quicker and easier for developers to build new homes in natural areas
- **Conservation measures should not be reduced while facing the climate crisis!**

SCHEDULE 4 MUNICIPAL ACT

- **Low-income tenants will be displaced.** The amendments will no longer obligate the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to return tenants to a home after they are evicted for construction of new housing

SCHEDULE 9 PLANNING ACT

- **Many municipalities will lose decision making power when it comes to official plans, zoning bylaws and subdivisions.**
- Upper-tier municipalities including **Simcoe, Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel and York will be subjected to intense sprawl imposed by the province**, regardless of their own plans to meet the demands of residents

Information Webinars

1. **Why You Should Be Concerned About Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act**, virtual event by [50 BY 2030 WATERLOO REGION](#)

- [Friday, Nov 4, 6:30 - 9:00 pm](#)
- [Tuesday, Nov 8, 6:30 - 9:00 pm](#)

2. **Bait and Switch: Understanding Bill 23, The 'More Sprawl, Fewer Wetlands' Act** virtual event by [Environmental Defence](#)

- [Monday, Nov 7, 12:00 - 1 p.m](#)

3. **Bill 23 Debrief and Solidarity Meeting** by [Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition](#) and Laura Bowman from [Ecojustice](#)

- [Tuesday, Nov 8, 12:00 - 2 pm](#)

Claire Malcolmson RLSC

Posted 2022-10-28

Acorn Canada

https://acorncanada.org/take_action/doug-fords-bill-23-destroys-existing-affordable-housing-builds-more-luxury-condos-scrap-it-now/



Doug Ford is back and this time with a Housing Bill that is devastating for low- and moderate-income renters. Recently, the PC Government introduced the More Homes Built Faster 2022 Act (Bill 23) claiming that it will be a new solution to the housing crisis in Ontario. But, the Bill is simply a way to build many more luxury condos and takes away years of gains that ACORN members and allies have painstakingly won in achieving stronger affordable housing policies and stronger tenant protections in case of renovations/demolitions in various cities.

The Bill will intensify the housing crisis by accelerating evictions and homelessness. Send a quick letter to the Premier Doug Ford, Housing Minister Steve Clark, your local MPP, your City Councillor and your Mayor. The cities are worried and need to be as the Bill takes away powers they have to protect tenants' rights and build real affordable housing.

More info here:

- The Bill says that 1.5 million homes will be constructed in 10 years. But all this housing will be unaffordable.
- The definition of affordability is also being changed.
- Currently, the cities can draft their own Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) policies and mandate developers to set aside 20-30% of units as affordable. But with this new Bill, the

developers will be required to set aside a mere 5% of units in new developments as affordable.

- The Bill requires developers to keep these affordable housing units as affordable for only 25 years after which the unit will return to the market!
- In cases of demolition (demolition or conversion to condos), tenants who currently have a right to return in cities such as in Toronto and Mississauga, might lose that right.
- Several cities including Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton were on their way to bringing strong rental replacement and anti-renoviction bylaws. This Bill will push cities to follow a “standardized” approach which will result in watered down versions of tenant protections that tenants want and need.
- It exempts developers from paying development charges and does not say anything about how they will get paid. These are important charges to meet expenses for transit, waste water etc.