



NIAGARA FALLS NATURE CLUB

P.O. BOX 901, NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO, L2E 6V8.

November 24, 2020

Mr. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

Mr. Jeff Yurek, Ontario Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks

RE: Schedule 6 of Bill 229

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Yurek,

Ontario's conservation authorities were created by a Conservative government in 1946 when Ontario was experiencing desertification after a period of uncontrolled deforestation. After the devastation caused by Hurricane Hazel the importance of watershed based science including regulating development in valley lands and flood plains became apparent. If you do not remove schedule 6 from bill 229, we will all be forced to live with the consequences.

Because this change was included in a budget bill, the public was not given opportunities to comment before it was voted on. This government is the government of all of us, not just the development community. It is a blow to democratic government to give developers the right to force fast-tracking of development approvals and to appeal decisions that do not award them what they have asked for. Citizens who wish to challenge planning decisions that would cause harm to the environment are not given these same rights. The Minister should not have the power to negate a Conservation Authority's refusal to issue a development permit.

We object to the restriction you wish to place on Conservation Authority members to act on behalf of the watershed and not only in the interests of their municipality. Not all municipalities look at the long term health of the environment; many are only too pleased to push ahead any development regardless of consequences down the road. Here in Niagara we have a new board which is functioning well. Our citizen appointees bring great insight to the board; they are well versed in scientific and business knowledge. Insisting that only municipal councillors serve on boards would deprive citizens of this expertise and of a second look at possible consequences of a planning decision.

Conservation Authorities are the agencies that the public contacts when they have a concern with any conservation matter. The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority has over the years has provided education in conservation to children and adults through their water festival, envirothon and other programs. We need their expertise in monitoring, flood mitigation, drinking water safety, land conservation and ecological restoration. We enjoy spending time hiking in the lovely and diverse conservation lands

What makes Ontario a great place to live are the forests and wetlands which provide us with clean air and water and help to mitigate climate change. Please do not allow uncontrolled development to destroy what is good for all who live here. Think of our children and of the future. Please remove Schedule 6 from Bill 229.

Sincerely,

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