



# Town of Atikokan

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Premier of Ontario  
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The Honourable John Yakabuski  
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry  
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99 Wellesley Street West  
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3

The Honourable Rod Phillips  
Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks  
Ferguson Block 11th Floor  
77 Wellesley Street West  
Toronto, ON M7A 2T5

February 22, 2019

**Re: Northern and Rural First Nations and Municipal Leaders Require Decisive Action on Endangered Species Act Review. Insist on Permanent Recognition of the CFSA as an Equivalent Process to ESA.**

Premier Ford, Minister Phillips, and Minister Yakabuski,

On behalf of our respective organizations, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *10<sup>th</sup> Year Review of Ontario's Endangered Species Act: Discussion Paper*, ERO number 013-4143. We look forward to working with your government to improve the effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and ensure a balanced approach between a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

The most important action the government must take is a permanent recognition of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) as an equivalent process to the Endangered Species Act (ESA); either through a perpetual Section 55 Regulation or legislative change to the ESA. The CFSA already provides landscape, stand, and site-level direction for managing, conserving, and protecting species at risk. Having two acts attempting to accomplish the same outcome represents the single greatest piece of red tape and duplication to this sector.

Once this essential first step has been accomplished, we must also ensure the following requirements be embedded in a new, modernized ESA:

1. Consideration of climate change on habitat in all species at risk policy
2. Cumulative impact of all species at risk policy on a healthy economy
3. Socio-economic impact analysis must be completed and shared with impacted stakeholders and First Nations prior to any species at risk policy being implemented

Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
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Hon. John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources & Forestry  
February 22, 2019  
Page 2

The sector will continue to operate under the CFSA which, by law, requires, forestry operations to follow an approved forest management plan. Guides delivered under the CFSA include operational prescriptions and conditions, which may include reserves, modified operations, or specific conditions on road use and construction in the area near a species at risk and their habitat.

Once a permanent Section 55 Regulation has been passed, or other legislative change made to the ESA recognizing equivalency between the two acts, more work must be done on species at risk policy currently being delivered under the CFSA. Overly precautionary timing restrictions on forest operations for wood or Blanding's turtle, for example, is currently putting people out of work for weeks to months at a time; this is while the sector operates under an existing regulation and through the CFSA.

It is our understanding that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) is responsible for species at risk prescriptions currently being delivered under the CFSA. It is our expectation that unworkable prescriptions, such as the turtle example provided above, will be addressed and improved regardless of any future changes made to the ESA.

Further, we remain extremely concerned about role of the Federal Government and potential negotiations with Ontario on Conservation Agreements. For example, a MNR socio-economic analysis determined that up to 2800 jobs could be lost and 8 mills could close as a result of the province meeting the federal disturbance thresholds for caribou. It is our expectation that Ontario will consult with us well in advance of any draft and will not enter into a Conservation Agreement with the Federal Government that will result in lost jobs and lost opportunity.

In order to avoid catastrophic socio-economic impacts, we need permanent recognition that the CFSA is an equivalent process to the ESA, while developing workable species at risk policy, and sending a strong message to the Federal government that Ontario will manage our own resources.

We would be happy to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the best path forward to ensuring positive outcomes for species at risk while keeping people in this province working.

Sincerely,



Dennis Brown  
Mayor

CC Minister Vic Fedeli, Ministry of Finance  
Minister Greg Rickford, Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, Ministry of Indigenous Affairs  
MPP Ross Romano, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs  
Minister Todd Smith, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade  
Giles Gherson, Deputy Minister of Red Tape and Regulatory Burden  
Jamie Lim, President and CEO, OFIA