

Nov 23, 2022

Re: Proposed Updates to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System
ERO number 019-6160
<https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-6160>

Proposal summary

In support of Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan 3.0 and the government's commitment to support the construction of 1.5 million new housing units over the next ten years, the province is proposing updates the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System that would remove duplicate requirements and streamline the evaluation process.

Via: Public Input Coordinator MNRF - PD - Resources Planning and Development Policy Branch

Dear Standing Committee,

Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 Act's intent to increase housing in Ontario for low-income, young Canadians, and new Canadians is admirable – Premier Ford is a man of action and understands the need. However, after reading extensively on Bill 23 and the concerns raised by various authorities on the environmental impact of these changes to our greenbelt and wetlands, I am imploring you to delay the Bill and work cooperatively with the conservation authorities and municipalities to amend the act. The housing crisis faced in Ontario must be planned by all of our elected officials working collectively on innovative solutions to increase housing availability that is sustainable to the environment. Europeans have been doing this for decades as they do not have the land Ontario and Canada has. Let's not take the easy approach and absorb our virgin lands for housing and the supporting infrastructures such as roads.

The cost of building homes by re-evaluating wetlands and farmlands to expand housing developments into rural areas is not sustainable for the future of Ontario and Canada for these main reasons:

- With the info published by IPCC and Cop27 Paris Climate Change agreement, our world has 10 years to reduce our carbon emissions to minimize a 1.5-degree Celsius rise in global temperature.¹
- Canada has promised to reduce carbon emissions by 40% by 2030 and be net zero by 2040.²

¹ IPCC report on Climate change and 1.5 C <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

² Canada's commitment to reduce carbon emissions
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-plan/climate-plan-overview/emissions-reduction-2030.html>

- Farmlands in Ontario are reduced by 321 acres a day in Ontario³, food security is at risk both for Ontario and Canada. Wetlands and farmlands are a much higher value on what they provide as carbon sinks, habitat for species, food security vs the commercial land value or housing value.
- Amendments to Bill 23 submitted by the Conservation Authorities of Ontario, majors of Ontario, naturalists and scientists will provide sound evidence on why wetlands, greenspaces, and farmlands must be fiercely protected.
- A climate lawsuit by a group of high-school students and Ecojustice, Mathur et. al. v. Her Majesty in Right of Ontario⁴ had a full hearing in the Ontario Supreme Court on September 2022. They argued that Premier Ford's policies has weakened steps made to reduce climate change and their constitutional rights for life, liberty and security have been violated.
- Bill 23 as it stands, would compound the effects of climate change.

In grade 8 at the age of 12, I made a speech for the PTA on the threat of the Cold War and atomic bombs to the world. To prevent this mass destruction, my last sentence was "the answer lies in the hearts of man". I am asking you as a 67-year-old grandmother who is deeply concerned on the climate change crisis and future of our grandchildren, grandnephews and grandnieces -- all the young people whose future will be deeply affected by proposed changes listed on Bill 23. Please look into your hearts and do the right thing. It is your moral obligation as an elected official.

Sincerely,

Personal names removed for the submission online.

³ CBC article June 18, 2022. Data from the 2021 Census of Agriculture shows Ontario is losing 319 acres of farmland daily, equal to the loss of one average family farm
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ont-farmland-loss-1.6493833>

⁴ Ontario Supreme Court case <https://ecojustice.ca/case/genclimateaction-mathur-et-al-v-her-majesty-in-right-of-ontario/>