

SCHEDULE 6 BILL 229

We support conservation authorities

December 2020

Bronte Village Residents Association





Schedule 6 of Bill 229

Opposition Statement

We strongly oppose Schedule 6 of Bill 229 which seeks to greatly curtail the mandate of conservation authorities and as a result put Ontarians at risk who rely on these services to ensure access to safe drinking water, no development on or along watersheds or wetlands, and the preservation of the Natural Heritage Systems and water resources.

BRONTE VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

The Bronte Village Residents Association (BVRA) is a non-profit residents association that represents the views of its members and community by:

1. protecting Bronte's character, charm, and waterfront,
2. fostering and promoting community spirit and Bronte and Ward 1, and
3. respecting the heritage of Bronte.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Why do we need conservation authorities?

Conservation authorities work with municipalities, the Province, and other agencies to manage, restore, and protect natural and water resources through:

- planning reviews of development applications to ensure development does not occur in or along flood plains, watersheds, wetlands, or our Natural Heritage Systems
- educational programs and festivals, especially with the youth, about natural habitats, safe drinking water, endangered species, and climate change
- providing guidance and assistance for sustainable forest management and wildlife habitat improvements
- managing parks and green spaces allowing us to commune holistically with nature, and
- facilitating stewardship programs to help us all contribute toward climate resiliency

Conservation authorities in Ontario demonstrated their value by taking swift measures to adapt their operations and implement a digital transformation to allow parks to open safely to the public after the first wave of the global pandemic, Covid-19. The system of contactless booking and check-in, allowed Ontarians a vital opportunity to commune with nature, during a time when travel was restricted and social distancing, among other measures remain in place to help curb the spread of the virus.

In the long term, their ongoing services help contribute to policies and measures which ensure the continued sustainability of water and natural resources, and management of population growth within Ontario, that values a rich biodiversity and climate resiliency.



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What are we opposed to?

Public consultation, which is the cornerstone of our democracy, was minimal concerning Schedule 6 of Bill 229. It is also confusing to the public that this schedule be part of an omnibus bill to put policies and financial measures in place to respond to the effects of Covid-19.

The proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act within Schedule 6 of Bill 229 seek to:

- curtail planning reviews of development applications,
- limit the scope of conservation authorities,
- allow the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry to directly approve development applications with little or no technical review from conservation authorities, and
- mandate the appointment of board members to be municipal elected officials only, giving rise to conflict of interest and compromised fiduciary duties.

What do we propose?

We strongly urge Premier Doug Ford, his Honourable Ministers and the Standing Committee of Finance and Economic Affairs *to repeal Schedule 6 of Bill 229* and seek further consultation with stakeholder groups and the public to ensure the best way forward for Ontarians and the resiliency of our environment.

Our position is aligned with the groundswell of opposition to Schedule 6 of Bill 229 from conservation authorities, affiliated agencies, municipalities of Ontario and the public.

As taxpayers, we seek governance in Ontario that is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and which follows the rule of law, to ensure our current and future viability, vitality and sustainability.