January 20, 2019

ERO Number 013-4293: BILL 66, RESTORING ONTARIO’S COMPETITIVENESS ACT, 2018

ERO Number 013-4125: PROPOSED OPEN-FOR-BUSINESS PLANNING TOOL

ERO Number 013-4239: NEW REGULATION UNDER THE PLANNING ACT FOR OPEN-FOR-BUSINESS PLANNING TOOL

**Save Our Water, a Centre Wellington residents group concerned with protecting groundwater OPPOSES THE PROPOSALS UNDER BILL 66 SCHEDULE 10.**

Under the guise of cutting red tape, Schedule 10 is a full-scale assault on Ontario’s environmental policies and legislation, specifically the Clean Water Act, the Great Lakes Water Act, the Greenbelt Act, the Oak Ridges Moraine Act, the Places to Grow Act, the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, the Provincial Policy Statement and Official Plans. All of these acts and policies could be circumvented in 2019 by the proposed new category of municipal zoning powers called the “open-for-business planning by-law.”

The proposed planning by-law would allow municipalities to fast track industrial and employment development without adhering to municipal zoning by-laws. Source water protection zones are one critical example. Elected municipal officials should never be put in a position of deciding to by-pass legislation put in place to protect the environment and future health of Ontarians. This is an enormous step backwards. It puts the future of Ontarians at risk!!!

Ontario’s Clean Water Act was established in 2006 following the Walkerton tragedy in order to prevent threats to drinking water sources and to protect Ontario residents from such dire errors in municipal management from every happening again.

Premier Ford is prepared to decimate environmental protection and jeopardize the safety of our groundwater supplies by allowing industrial development on land with zoning restrictions and in jurisdictions where drinking water sources are at risk.  Further, he plans to download responsibility to the municipalities to administer the changes. Under his new scheme, a municipality can potentially agree to a new development with no public input or discussion, and it can ignore environmental protection practises while developers and industry proponents are systematically rewarded.

The Provincial government then will simply provide the automatic rubber stamp of approval. Once approved, there is no recourse. It cannot be appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT).

Who gains by the enacting of Bill 66? Definitely not the people of Ontario.

Premier Ford has misled Ontarians. Ontarians do not want factories and subdivisions built on the sensitive farmland, forests and moraines that recharge the aquifers needed for our drinking water. Premier Ford has obviously not given thought to the fact that the people of Ontario will not allow him to pursue this course of action. Already the cities of Burlington and Hamilton have indicated that they will not be a party to the destruction of Ontario's hard won fight for meaningful environmental protections.

Legislation aimed at boosting our economy *should not trump* regulations explicitly created to safeguard our common resources (including our groundwater) and the well-being of Ontarians. **Rather than leading our province as “A Government for the People”,** **this legislation makes it apparent that the current government is shamelessly prioritizing business interests at all costs.**

**Save Our Water OPPOSES Bill 66 and the proposed open-for-business planning by-law.**