



# *Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek*

GRASSY NARROWS, ONTARIO P0X 1B0 • PHONE: (807) 925-2201 • FAX: (807) 925-2649

May 16, 2025

**BY E-FILING AND EMAIL ([minister.mnrf@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mnrf@ontario.ca))**

Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Todd McCarthy  
College Park, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 777 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Environmental Registry of Ontario  
77 Grenville Street, 6th Floor  
Toronto, ON M7A 2C1

Dear Minister McCarthy and Environmental Registry of Ontario:

**RE: Bill 5 – *Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025***  
**ERO Numbers 025-0409; 025-0380; 025-0396; 025-0389; 025-0391; 025-0409;**  
**025-0416; 025-0418;**

I am writing on behalf of Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek ("ANA" or "Grassy Narrows First Nation"), to express our nation's firm opposition to Bill 5.

Grassy Narrows is an Anishinaabe First Nation located in northwestern Ontario. Grassy Narrows is the collective rights holder of an Aboriginal people within the meaning of section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, an Indigenous people within the meaning of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and the Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek under the *Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek Aaki Declaration* (Grassy Narrows Land Declaration or the "Land Declaration"). We exercise inherent, aboriginal and Treaty 3 rights.

Grassy Narrows people hunt, trap, fish, gather medicines, and practice our Anishinaabe way of life to provide for ourselves, our families and community. These land and water-based practices have always been, and they continue to be, essential to Grassy Narrows people's sense of self and identity, culture, wellbeing, health, and economy.

The territory in and around Grassy Narrows has been intensely impacted by industrial activities for many decades, including diversion, dam and hydroelectric projects, pulp and paper manufacturing that led to the dumping of approximately 9,000 kilograms of mercury into the English-Wabigoon River System, clearcut logging, and ongoing effluent

discharge, and mining. The impacts of industrial activity have been highly detrimental to Grassy Narrows people, our health, and our ability to exercise our rights. Grassy Narrows people are particularly vulnerable to additional and cumulative environmental contamination.

The public is frequently told that these were mistakes made in the past, which could not be repeated under today's laws and regulations. This is not true. The current regulatory regime for industry is woefully inadequate and continues to fail to protect Grassy Narrows from intense and ongoing industrial impacts. Our waters remain contaminated with mercury, the Dryden mill continues double the mercury in our fish by discharging effluent that stimulates methylation in our river, gold mines upstream continue to pollute our headwaters, and giant dams continue to divert and alter the flow of our life-giving river. And yet the Crown is setting the stage for nuclear waste disposal and multiple additional mines in our headwaters. The pollution of our water, the contamination of our fish, and the harm to our people continues to this day under Ontario's current regulations, which clearly favour industrial extraction by multi-national corporations at our expense.

The pollution does not stop at Grassy Narrows. If Ontario's laws allow us to be poisoned by industry, then people across Ontario who live downstream and downwind of industry will also be impacted. We all rely on the air we breath, the water we drink, and the plants and animals that we eat. We are all connected to the sources of life and we will all be impacted when they are degraded.

Bill 5 represents a further and existential threat to Grassy Narrows people. Bill 5 consists predominantly of ten schedules with amendments to two categories of laws: 1) amendments to laws that re designed to accelerate energy and infrastructure development and mining, particularly in so-called "special economic zones"; 2) amendments to environmental protection and assessment, endangered species, and heritage preservation laws to allow for the rapid implementation of energy and infrastructure development and mining.

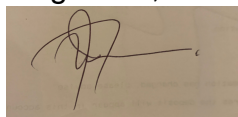
Bill 5 would dramatically weaken the few protections that are in place for the environment that we rely on by allowing Ontario to exempt dangerous industrial projects from current regulatory requirements. It would tilt the balance even further in the interests of industrial extraction that harms us.

As Ontario knows well, the proposed removal of the already inadequate protections for the environment, animals, fish and Indigenous peoples will allow free reign for mining companies to continue the destruction of the lands, the displacement of our sacred animals, further contaminate the fish and the water and exacerbate our exposure to the poison of methylmercury.

This legislation is a direct attack on our rights to conserve and protect our land and to live our Anishinaabe way of life safely. We have been harmed too much by industry already. We need healing and we need greater protections. We demand the immediate withdrawal of this dangerous legislation that violates our rights and irresponsibly puts us at great risk of further harm.

Grassy Narrows Chief and Council have delegated engagement on land protection issues to the Grassy Narrows Land Protection Team. Please ensure that you copy the Chief and Council and the Land Protection Team on all communications on this and other lands matters.

Miigwetch,



Joseph B. Fobister

Lead Negotiator, Grassy Narrows Lands Protection Team

C.C.

**Grassy Narrows Chief and Council**

Chief Sherry Ackabee ([sherryackabee@outlook.com](mailto:sherryackabee@outlook.com))  
Councillor Bear Copenace ([b.copenace@hotmail.com](mailto:b.copenace@hotmail.com))  
Councillor Joe Devlin ([joe.devlingnfn@gmail.com](mailto:joe.devlingnfn@gmail.com))  
Councillor Aaron Kokopenace ([aaronkokopenace@hotmail.com](mailto:aaronkokopenace@hotmail.com))  
Councillor Arnold Pahpasay ([aaronkokopenace@hotmail.com](mailto:aaronkokopenace@hotmail.com))

**ANA Land Protection Team**

Mike Fobister, Lands Team Supervisor ([mike.fobister@gmail.com](mailto:mike.fobister@gmail.com))  
David Sone, ANA Advisor ([david.sone@gmail.com](mailto:david.sone@gmail.com))  
Jackie Esmonde, ANA Legal Counsel ([jesmonde@cavalluzzo.com](mailto:jesmonde@cavalluzzo.com))  
Sydney Lang, ANA Legal Counsel ([slang@cavalluzzo.com](mailto:slang@cavalluzzo.com))  
Dan Mossip-Balkwill, ANA Advisor ([dan.mossip.balkwill@gmail.com](mailto:dan.mossip.balkwill@gmail.com))  
Annelies Cooper, ANA Advisor ([annelies.cooper@gmail.com](mailto:annelies.cooper@gmail.com))

**Impact Assessment Agency of Canada**

Ian Ketcheson, Vice-President, Indigenous Relations Sector ([ian.ketcheson@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:ian.ketcheson@iaac-aeic.gc.ca))  
Natalie Boyd, Project Manager ([natalie.boyd@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:natalie.boyd@iaac-aeic.gc.ca))  
Ian Lindsay, Senior Consultation Analyst ([ian.lindsay@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:ian.lindsay@iaac-aeic.gc.ca))  
Carl Johansson, Team Leader, Ontario Region ([carl.johansson@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:carl.johansson@iaac-aeic.gc.ca))  
Elyse Batista, Environmental Analyst ([elyse.batista@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:elyse.batista@iaac-aeic.gc.ca))

**Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks**

Sarah Harrison, Deputy Minister ([sarah.harrison@ontario.ca](mailto:sarah.harrison@ontario.ca))

**Ministry of Energy and Mines**

MiningActAmendments@ontario.ca

Honourable Minister Stephen Lecce ([ministerenergy@ontario.ca](mailto:ministerenergy@ontario.ca))  
Susanna Laaksonen-Craig, Deputy Minister ([deputy.mines@ontario.ca](mailto:deputy.mines@ontario.ca))  
Patrick Barnes, Consultation and Aboriginal Treaty Rights Advisor ([patrick.m.barnes@ontario.ca](mailto:patrick.m.barnes@ontario.ca))  
Teri McDonald, Director, Indigenous Consultation & Partnerships Branch ([teri.mcdonald@ontario.ca](mailto:teri.mcdonald@ontario.ca))  
Trina Rawn, Director, Mineral Development Branch ([Trina.Rawn@ontario.ca](mailto:Trina.Rawn@ontario.ca))

**Ministry of Natural Resources**

Minister Mike Harris ([minister.mnrf@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mnrf@ontario.ca))  
Drew Vanderduim, Deputy Minister ([deputy.mnr@ontario.ca](mailto:deputy.mnr@ontario.ca))  
Myles Perchuk, District Manager, Red Lake ([myles.perchuk@ontario.ca](mailto:myles.perchuk@ontario.ca))  
Alissa Van Wynen, District Resource Liaison Specialist, Red Lake ([alissa.vanwynen@ontario.ca](mailto:alissa.vanwynen@ontario.ca))