



ANISHINABEK NATION

May 15, 2025

Standing Committee on the Interview
Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario

Attention: Committee Clerk

RE: Bill 5 “Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act” – ERO No. 025-0416

I am writing on behalf of the Anishinabek Nation with respect to the above-referenced matter and have attached our formal submission in this regard.

Firstly, we wish to acknowledge the goal of the Province of Ontario in relation to the economy in these times of uncertainty and strained relations between Canada and the United States. We understand not only the need but the importance of building a strong and resilient economy in Ontario for all Ontarians inclusive of *Anishinabek and First Nations* people. We recognize in order to do this, it has to be done quickly and efficiently as we face these great uncertain times together. However, all the above must be done in true partnership and allyship with our Anishinabek First Nations. Our Anishinabek Nation First Nations are not opposed to strengthening our collective economy, however, this strengthening must be done properly and consistent with our rights, our inherent stewardship responsibilities and our vision for sustainable and inclusive development. We outline in this letter and attached document both our concerns and proposed solutions with respect to Bill 5.

Anishinabek Nation cannot support increasing risk to the environment, the threat to ill understood importance of species diversity, lack of protection of water and waterways, and further erasure of historical existence of Anishinabek First Nations on our treaty protected and aboriginal title lands. It is our view that in the Bill in its current form provides a clear benefit to non-Aboriginal treaty partner while showing no clear benefit for Anishinabek First Nations.

Bill 5 significantly increases the chances of conflict with Anishinabek First Nations who are continually facing challenges in exercising rights when development projects encroach on traditional, Aboriginal title and treaty territories. The prioritization of non-Aboriginal economic growth over First Nation interests leads to further marginalization and creates an imbalance that cannot

be supported and was not envisioned by our mutual forefathers in the creation of treaties. Further, this is a breach of your fiduciary duty in prudent management of Aboriginal title lands to which you have been entrusted with under section 109 of the Constitution Act, 1987.

The goal must be mutually acceptable sustainable and inclusive development while ensuring the protections of all animals, plants, water and waterways, historical burial sites and places where historical artifacts are protected.

In the Bill's current form, it is anticipated that conflict and court challenges will be triggered. This will further stall out the vision of the Province and will not be beneficial to anyone including our Anishinabek First Nations. We believe that the attached document outlining our concerns and providing you with proposed solutions will mitigate conflict and court challenges allowing you to uphold the Honour of the Crown, strengthen Ontario's economic future inclusive of First Nations, advance reconciliation and build an economy for all.

In closing, we remain ready and willing to work with your government to achieve our mutual goals, strengthen our relationship and achieve economic reconciliation for our Anishinabek First Nations.

Miigwetch and thank you for considering the Anishinabek Nation's comments and recommendations on Bill 5.

Sincerely,



Linda Debassige
Grand Council Chief

cc. Regional Chief Mel Hardy, Northern Superior Region
Regional Chief Scott McLeod, Lake Huron Region
Regional Chief Marsha Smoke, Southeast Region
Regional Chief Joe Miskokomon, Southwest Region
Anishinabek First Nations Leadership
Todd Lewis, Director of Policy, Political Office
Allan Dokis, Interim Chief Executive Officer
Jason Laronde, Director, Lands & Resources
Rhonda Gagnon, Manager, Lands & Resources