

Overview of Ontario's Bill 5

A Snapshot of the Bill's Most Egregious Provisions

BACKGROUNDER

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environmental
defence

Bill 5, the *Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act*, would give Premier Ford and his cabinet unprecedented power over our communities, including powers to dictate who is exempt from the law and who is not.

If passed, Bill 5 would be a direct attack on healthy communities, good planning, clean water and air, species at risk and the rights of Indigenous people—all to benefit a handful of the government's hand-picked friends.

The Ontario Heritage Act (Schedule 7)

Schedule 7 of the bill proposes to exempt developments from archeological assessments if the Ontario government is of the opinion that an exemption “could potentially advance one or more of the following provincial priorities”:

- Transit;
- Housing;
- Health and Long-Term Care;
- Other infrastructure; and
- Such Other Priorities as May Be Prescribed.

What does this mean for Ontarians?

- By exempting infrastructure and housing projects from archeological assessments, the Ontario government will be backtracking on Indigenous reconciliation progress made since the Oka crisis of 1990 as well as the 2006 standoff in Caledonia in 2006.
- Archeological (and environmental) assessments often trigger the duty to consult with Indigenous communities and First Nations governments. Undertaking archeological assessments processes is also one of the ways that governments uphold the Honour of the Crown. Destroying undisturbed Indigenous historic sites in the name of economic progress would set Ontario back decades in Indigenous and economic reconciliation.