



Via email

May 16, 2025

Re: Proposed Special Economic Zones Act ERO #025-0391

As Chief of the Kashechewan First Nation ("**Kashechewan**"), I am writing to express our serious concerns about the Province of Ontario ("**Ontario**")'s proposals contained in Bill 5.

The relationship between the Crown and Indigenous Peoples is governed by the principle of the honour of the Crown, which requires the Crown to act with integrity, fairness, and in good faith when engaging with Indigenous Peoples. This includes meaningful, timely, and good-faith consultation before decisions are made that may adversely affect Nation's rights and interests.

Like Indigenous peoples across Ontario, for generations, our people have relied on and continue to rely on the lands and waters within our territory for fishing, harvesting, hunting, trapping, camping, and spiritual and cultural practices. These activities are fundamental to Kashechewan's identity, survival, and governance. We continue to exercise our rights throughout the territory in physical, cultural, and spiritual ways that stem from the land and inform our decision-making.

Ontario must ensure that proposed amendments, and Ontario's conduct flowing from the amendments affecting resources, lands, waters and cultural history respect *Constitution Act* 35 rights.

Proposed Special Economic Zones Act ERO #025-0391

One of our greatest concerns with Bill 5 is the proposal to create "Special Economic Zones," in which Cabinet may exempt proponents from compliance with legislation, regulations, or instruments. The proposal does not provide criteria for the use of Special Economic Zones. This sweeping delegation of power creates a legal vacuum that weakens or circumvents the triggers for the duty to consult and accommodate and effectively guts the existing framework for upholding our rights.

While we understand Ontario's intent to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers and accelerate development, these objectives must not come at the expense of constitutional obligations or international human rights commitments.

Ontario must meet its legal duty to meaningfully consult and accommodate affected Nations, including securing our free, prior, and informed consent for any development within Special Economic Zones, consistent with UNDRIP.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hosea Wesley", is written over a light blue circular stamp. The stamp contains some illegible text, possibly a date or official seal.

Chief Hosea Wesley
Kashechewan First Nation