

May 16, 2025

Re: ERO number 025-0380 Proposed interim changes to the Endangered Species Act, 2007 and a proposal for the Species Conservation Act, 2025

I strongly oppose Bill 5, the Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act. This legislation poses a serious threat to Ontario's natural heritage, democratic processes and Indigenous rights.

Bill 5 proposes to repeal the Endangered Species Act — one of the few tools we have to protect at-risk wildlife and the ecosystems they depend on. Replacing it with vague “goals” and unenforceable measures will lead to the further decline of species already on the brink. This is not modernization. It's deregulation that puts short-term industrial gain ahead of long-term ecological and community health.

Further, Bill 5: the Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act and its dangerous proposals, including the creation of Special Economic Zones, the weakening of Ontario's endangered species

It is extremely dangerous to create “special economic zones” that would allow cabinet to approve major development projects without proper environmental assessment, public input or Indigenous consultation. This short cut for Ford's friends undermines transparency, accountability and Ontario's duty to uphold Indigenous rights and treaties.

Ontario should not give up vital environmental protections or give the Provincial Cabinet unlimited power. This won't solve the trade war, or stimulate economic growth. It will only bring us closer to the chaos we've seen in the United States. It would also severely undermine Indigenous rights.

Granting unprecedented powers to the Provincial Cabinet and could allow corporations or individuals to avoid any laws and by-laws in entire areas of Ontario. There are no limits, no rules, and no public input. This is not how democracy works. This taking place in Ontario which is already lagging behind other province in reaching protection goals, is beyond irresponsible.

The new Species Conservation Act (Schedules 2 & 10) would strip away real protections for at-risk species and their habitats. Science and recovery planning are being replaced by an empty process that can't protect our wildlife.

The exemption for the Eagle's Nest mine (Schedule 3) removes the need for a full environmental assessment — ignoring the serious risks to climate-critical peatlands and Indigenous territory. This goes against Canada's commitments to reconciliation and climate action.

Ontarians have not asked for weaker protections or less say in decisions that affect the province's land, water and future. Bill 5 would silence community voices, marginalize science and erase decades of hard-won environmental progress.

I urge the Ontario government to withdraw Bill 5 in its entirety and instead work with environmental experts, Indigenous leaders and the public to strengthen — not dismantle — our systems of environmental protection.

Protecting nature is not a barrier to economic growth. It's the foundation of a healthy, resilient and just society. Our survival depends on nature to remain healthy. Your government has no right to undermine our survival, resource security and biodiversity in Ontario.

Please, stop Bill 5: the Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act and its dangerous proposals. Stop giving your government extreme new powers to ignore laws that protect the environment, public health, and Indigenous rights — without accountability. This is unacceptable.

It will be too late once the consequences of this absolutely ill-advised legislature take place.

Sincerely,