

Regarding the Special Economic Zones Act 2025:

These excerpts are quoted from the Government of Ontario Environmental Registry website, under “proposal details” for the Special Economic Zones Act, 2025:

<https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/025-0391>

“The Special Economic Zones Act, 2025 is meant to ***quickly advance***⁽¹⁾ strategically important economic activity and priority projects within designated zones. By building ***faster***⁽¹⁾ and more strategically, Ontario can protect its industries, ***mitigate the impact of trade disruptions***⁽²⁾, and ensure the long-term prosperity and security of the economy.”

“Once a zone is set up, vetted projects in the zone with ***reliable proponents***⁽³⁾ that meet high standards for operation, safety, ***and the environment***⁽⁴⁾ can benefit from things like:

- ***faster permitting***⁽¹⁾
- streamlining some permits and approvals
- simplified requirements
- priority⁽⁴⁾ access to one-window services”

- (1) Faster is not always better. Faster leads to errors. Faster makes informed opposition more difficult. Faster makes it easier to sweep things under the rug, without properly functioning oversight.
- (2) Trade disruptions occur on a short timescale, with minimal warning. No amount of fast-tracking of economically related building, which will, despite the fast-tracking, take in the vicinity of one to two years, can mitigate something that is happening *now*. This is just a ploy by Premier Ford’s Conservative government to prey upon the fears of Ontario citizens generated by the current economical chaos.
- (3) The phrase “reliable proponents” sounds too much to me like “Doug Ford’s buddies”, an issue that has resulted in the unrecoverable loss of an important part of Ontario’s heritage and history, the Ontario Place waterfront property, to make way for something that will benefit only the wealthy elite, not to mention the corporations involved in that project.
- (4) This is the **ONLY** reference to the environment in the entire proposal summary, and it gives no details about what environmental factors and practices will be considered when vetting projects and determining who are reliable proponents, or what level of compliance these proponents must meet regarding these factors and practices.

I am all in favour of Ontario remaining economically competitive and protecting its existing industries, but this legislation gives too much wiggle room for corruption and profiteering at the expense of our most valuable asset, the land itself.