

Ontario Bill 60 ERO 025-1071

Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025 Timeline Nov 22/25

Climate Action Newmarket Aurora Submission on Bill 60 – *Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025*,

While improving the efficiency of infrastructure delivery is important, the proposed amendments risk undermining existing environmental protections, reducing public oversight, and weakening the accountability of municipalities and developers in ways that may negatively impact Ontario's climate and environmental goals. Each schedule has been listed with its related concerns.

Schedule 1 – Building Transit Faster Act, 2020

Changes of Concern:

- Reduces notice periods for construction, operation, and maintenance from 30 days to 15 days.
- Allows the Minister to delegate key functions broadly.

Concern:

- Accelerated timelines reduce municipal and public ability to review environmental or climate impacts of transit projects.
- Broader authority to alter municipal infrastructure without full consultation risks unanticipated environmental effects, including impacts on flood control, stormwater management, and natural heritage corridors.

What is needed:

- Requirement for climate or environmental impact assessments prior to exercising expanded powers.
- Transparency measures or mechanisms for meaningful public input.

Schedule 3 – Development Charges Act, 1997

Changes of Concern:

- Alters rules on spending reserve funds and local service policies.

Concern:

- Funding decisions for services tied to development charges could prioritize speed and cost over climate-resilient infrastructure and sustainable land-use planning.

What is needed:

- Clear guidance on ensuring that development charges are applied to climate mitigation measures, green infrastructure, or natural heritage protection.
- Public transparency mechanisms beyond ministerial review.

Schedule 5 - Highway Traffic Act

Changes of Concern:

- Would prohibit municipalities from reducing the number of motor-vehicle travel lanes when installing new bicycle lanes (or “any other prescribed purpose”).

Concern:

- This effectively limits the local authority's ability to evaluate all effective options to resolve transportation challenges and assumes that motor-vehicular travel is always the superior solution
- This effectively limits local authority to implement “road diets” or reallocate space from cars to bikes or buses, raising concerns about provincial over-reach into municipal transportation planning.
- By restricting removal of vehicle lanes, the schedule may hinder the creation of protected and continuous bicycle lanes or bus lanes that require lane reduction, thereby potentially constraining progress on active-transportation and transit climate goals. The schedule’s framing around avoiding reduction of lanes assumes that reducing vehicle lanes necessarily worsens “traffic flow,” which critics argue mis-frames congestion and mobility.
- Does not clearly define which “other prescribed purpose” beyond bicycle lanes could trigger the prohibition. It also delegates significant discretion to the Minister/regulations — for example, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may prescribe highways or circumstances in which the prohibition doesn’t apply.

What is needed:

- Explicit provisions ensuring the maintenance or expansion of active-transportation infrastructure (e.g., bicycle lanes, bus lanes) as a required objective
- Mandated criteria or performance measures for how lane-reduction prohibitions will be reconciled with climate, equity, safety and modal-shift objectives.

- Municipal autonomy in assessing local context (e.g., neighbourhoods, transit corridors, cycling demand).
- Transparency and public-consultation requirements around the regulation-making or exemption processes.

Schedule 7 – Municipal Act, 2001

Changes of Concern:

- Transfers jurisdiction over water and sewage utilities in Peel to local municipalities.

Concern:

- Rapid transfer of responsibilities can disrupt water management systems, oversight, and long-term planning critical for climate resilience, especially in conjunction with pending proposed changes to the Clean Water Act, 2006.
- Local municipalities may lack capacity, expertise or resources to maintain environmental standards during transition.
- Local municipalities will continue to have to coordinate water and sewage utilities. Priorities of larger, urban entities may take priority over smaller entities compromising their ability to safely and effectively manage water and sewage infrastructure planning and operations.

What is needed:

- Safeguards ensuring continuity of water quality, infrastructure maintenance, and climate-adaptive planning . Ensuring guardrails are included in ERO 025-1060 and ERO 025-1104.

Schedule 8 – Ontario Water Resources Act

Changes of Concern:

- Expands Section 53 application to agricultural lots with multiple sewage works over certain capacity thresholds.

Concern:

- Increased sewage output from large agricultural operations poses significant risk to surface and groundwater quality.

- Potential cumulative effects on watershed health and drinking water sources may be underestimated.

What is needed:

- Requirements for environmental assessments, regular monitoring, and public reporting.
- Explicit integration with source water protection plans and climate resilience measures, including revision of proposed ERO 025-1060 and ERO 025-1104.

Schedule 10 – Planning Act

Changes of Concern:

- Reduces requirement for ministerial decisions to align with policy statements (except in Greenbelt areas).
- Changes rules on community improvement project areas and municipal authority over planning agreements.

Concern:

- Weakens alignment with provincial land-use policies that include climate, biodiversity, and environmental protection considerations.
- Delegation and ministerial discretion can bypass local public consultation and scientific review.

What is needed:

- Clear mechanisms for environmental review or community input when standards are reduced.
- Criteria for ensuring development is climate-resilient, energy-efficient, and aligned with watershed and habitat protection.

Schedule 11 – Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act

Changes of Concern:

- Removes potential legal challenge for certain highway works, stating they “have never constituted” expropriation.
- Allows the Minister to make regulations overriding standards for planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operation of highways and bridges.

Concern:

- Reduced legal recourse undermines accountability for environmental impacts of highway and bridge construction.
- Regulatory discretion could allow projects that increase emissions or degrade natural habitats without proper review.

What is needed:

- Requirements for climate impact assessments, habitat protection, or greenhouse gas reduction measures in highway projects, beyond what is currently proposed in the amendments to the Conservation Act.
- Transparency provisions for public reporting of design, construction, and environmental mitigation measures.

Schedule 15 – Transit-Oriented Communities Act, 2020

Changes of Concern:

- Ministers may require agreements with landowners for designated transit-oriented communities and collect information from municipalities regarding such land.

Concern:

- Centralized control can bypass municipal land-use planning and environmental review processes.
- Agreements can prioritize development speed over climate-smart design, energy efficiency, or protection of local ecosystems.

What is needed:

- Explicit obligations for climate-aligned urban design, green infrastructure, or emissions reduction targets.
- Public consultation or transparency requirements for agreements and collected information.

Schedule 16 – Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025

Changes of Concern:

- Ministers can designate corporations to provide water and wastewater services and regulate rates, governance, and operations.
- Extinguishes certain causes of action related to these services.

Concern:

- Concentration of power in ministerial discretion risks reduced local accountability and oversight over water quality and infrastructure resilience.
- Potential misalignment with climate-adaptive water management, source water protection, and long-term sustainability.

What is needed:

- Mandatory climate risk assessments, transparent rate-setting aligned with sustainable water management, and public reporting requirements, beyond what is currently being proposed in amendments to the Clean Water Act, 2006.
- Transparency in decision making through ministerial discretion that overrides effective selection and oversight processes at the local level.

Conclusion

Climate Action Newmarket Aurora supports the growth of clean grid public transit within communities and across the province. Bill 60 seeks to accelerate infrastructure delivery yet the amendments highlighted above significantly weaken environmental and climate safeguards, limit public and municipal oversight, and reduce accountability and transparency. The proposed changes risk long-term negative impacts on Ontario's climate commitments, water quality, natural heritage, and community resilience.

Climate Action Newmarket respectfully requests that the government:

1. Reinstate environmental and climate impact assessments for projects affected by these schedules.
2. Incorporate explicit climate, biodiversity, and watershed protections into development, transit, and water management decisions.
3. Ensure meaningful public consultation and transparency in planning processes that will shape long-term environmental and climate outcomes.