



## Legal and Legislative Services

June 24, 2025

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1  
[premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

Honourable and Dear Sir:

**Re: The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward Resolution - Bill 5 Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025**

Please be advised the Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie at its meeting of June 23, 2025, received and supported correspondence from The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward dated May 27, 2025, requesting the Province to define Special Economic Zones and their purpose with more clarity and ensure activities within such zones are equally subject to the local and provincial laws that support all Ontario and First Nations people and foster our social, cultural and environmental prosperity.

Attached please find a copy of The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward's correspondence dated May 27, 2025.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kind regards,

Ashlea Carter,  
Acting Manager, Legislative Services/Town Clerk [acarter@forterie.ca](mailto:acarter@forterie.ca)

AC:dlk

Encl.

The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Energy and Mines; [MinisterEnergy@ontario.ca](mailto:MinisterEnergy@ontario.ca)

The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; [minister.mah@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mah@ontario.ca)

The Honourable Todd McCarthy Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; [minister.mecp@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mecp@ontario.ca)

The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health; [Sylvia.Jones@ontario.ca](mailto:Sylvia.Jones@ontario.ca)

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[Municipalities of Ontario](http://Municipalities of Ontario)

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May 28, 2025

Please be advised that during the regular Council meeting of May 27, 2025 the following resolution regarding Bill 5: Protecting Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025 was carried.

**RESOLUTION NO. 205-317**

**DATE: May 27, 2025**

**MOVED BY: Councillor MacNaughton**

**SECONDED BY: Councillor Hirsch**

**WHEREAS the Government of Ontario has introduced Bill 5: Protecting Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025, which proposes substantial changes to many Acts within one bill which undermine environmental protections in order to "unleash the economy"; and**

**WHEREAS multiple inclusions will impact habitat, biodiversity protections and environmental integrity without proper process including but not limited to:**

- **the repeal and replacement of the Endangered Species Act with a weaker act;**
- **the creation of a Special Economic Zones Act which will permit exemptions from legislated environmental protections;**
- **changes to provisions to the Mining Act which provide sweeping powers to the Minister of Energy and Mines that are poorly defined, subject to caprice, or possibly designed to enable exemption from environment protection; and**

**WHEREAS proposed changes will override local planning authority, provincial legislation, and bylaw enforcement for the benefit of specific preferred proponents over the rights of Ontarians; and**

**WHEREAS First Nations citizens have an enshrined right to access their own archeology and Canadians have an enshrined responsibility to seek free, prior and informed consent from First Nation neighbours regarding land use; and**

**WHEREAS** several proposed changes could imperil the health of lands and water for which First Nations have traditional and treaty rights; and

**WHEREAS** the provisions of the Special Economic Zones Act are not clear enough to ensure that there are adequate legal and environmental protections to offset risks to Ontarians and First Nations members, to provide adequate safeguards against bad faith environmental practice; and protect against unsafe labour practice as identified by labour sector organizations; and

**WHEREAS** fairness is enshrined in both Canada's and Ontario's laws yet proposed changes seem to permit prejudicial regulatory practice (e.g. codifying permissions for "trusted proponents" over others); and

**WHEREAS** the wording of the changes to the Electricity Act seem to support Canadian ownership of energy suppliers but appear to potentially restrict development of specific types of energy and could impact local renewable energy development; and

**WHEREAS** there is no evidence that undermining of environmental protections, local legal frameworks, and the rights of First Nations communities in Ontario are a necessary step to "unleash the economy"; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Council of the County of Prince Edward supports any regulation that could encourage energy providers to Buy Canadian but urges the province to clarify the proposed provisions of the Energy Act and ensure they foster local green energy development; and

**THAT** the province remove the elements in Bill 5 that would reduce current environmental protections, reduce protections for species at risk, and reduce legal protection from bad faith actors in special economic zones; and

**THAT** the Council of the County of Prince Edward urges the Province to further define Special Economic Zones and their purpose with more clarity and ensure that activities within such zones are equally subject to the local and provincial laws that support all of Ontario and First Nations people and foster our social, cultural and environmental prosperity;

**AND FURTHERMORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Council of the County of Prince Edward expresses solidarity with the concerns of our neighbouring community, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and members of the Haudenosaunee Nation and support Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and their letter to the province of May 16th 2025, attached; and **THAT** this resolution be shared with the Honourable Doug Ford, Premiere of Ontario; Stephen Lecce, Minister of Energy and Mines; Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and

**Housing; Todd McCarthy Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health; Tyler Allsopp, Member of Provincial Parliament for Bay of Quinte; Chief Don Maracle, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte; AMO; ROMA; and the Municipalities of Ontario.**

**CARRIED**

Yours truly,



Victoria Leskie, **CLERK**

cc: Mayor Steve Ferguson, Councillor MacNaughton





# MOHAWKS OF THE BAY OF QUINTE

## KENHTÈ:KE KANYEN'KEHÁ:KA

*TYENDINAGA MOHAWK COUNCIL,  
24 Meadow Drive, Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, ON K0K 1X0  
Phone 613-396-3424 Fax 613-396-3627*

May 16, 2025

The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1  
[Email: premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

**Subject: Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte Comments on Bill 5 – Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025**

Dear Premier Ford,

I am writing to express the concerns and opinions of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte on the proposed Bill 5, *Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025*. Our community is concerned with the Bill's proposed amendments to the *Endangered Species Act, 2007* ("ESA") and the proposal to replace the ESA with the *Species Conservation Act, 2025*. We also have concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the *Electricity Act, 1998*, the *Environmental Assessment Act*, the *Mining Act*, the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the *Special Economic Zones Act, 2025*, and the *Rebuilding Ontario Place Act, 2023*, and how they would negatively impact our members, our traditional territories, and our rights as Indigenous people.

Although our community, Kenhtè:ke, is confined within the borders of Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, our traditional territory extends to a vast area in Ontario and our Members reside all across Canada and Ontario. Our Members also reside within the City of Toronto, other First Nations communities, and in other communities across the province that will be impacted by Bill 5 and its proposed changes to the aforementioned laws and regulations. As Chief of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, it is my responsibility to act in the best interests of our members, no matter where they reside. For this reason, the concerns expressed in this letter capture potential threats to Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, our traditional territory, and any other territories in the province upon which our members are resident.

The Province of Ontario has the highest Indigenous population across the country. Indigenous peoples have been the stewards of these lands and its inhabitants for centuries, ensuring that no matter what unexpected threats were posed, including threats to the environment and threats to trade and economic relations, the environment remained cared for and protected. This is our sacred duty and one that we do not take lightly. Without a healthy environment, the chances of future generations being prosperous, are greatly diminished.

### Concerns Regarding the Environment

We would like to note that the proposals posted by the Province of Ontario to the Environmental Registry of Ontario on April 17, 2025, represented by ERO numbers 25-0416, 025-0380, 025-0409, 25-041, 25-0391, 025-0396, 25-0389 are of great concern to our community. It is evident that the proposals both individually and collectively have the potential to cause serious adverse impacts on the environment, human health, and our right as Indigenous peoples to the stewardship of our lands.

Bill 5, *Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025*, if passed, will:

1. Exempt key projects from *Environmental Assessment Act* reviews.
2. Repeal the Endangered Species Act, 2007, replacing it with a weaker Species Conservation Act, 2025.
  - a. Reduce protection of the critical habitats of species at risk
  - b. Allow species to be at risk of harassment
  - c. Remove any reference to stewardship and Indigenous Traditional Knowledge
3. Empower the province to declare “special economic zones” under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2025, where provincial laws and municipal by-laws—including environmental and public-participation rules—would be inoperative.
4. Remove the third-party and science-based nature of species at risk assessment and introduce political interference in identifying what species at risk is added to the protection regulation.
5. Reduce opportunity for domestic renewable energy.
6. Weaken oversight of mining activities under the Mining Act.

The above proposed changes and introductions will reduce and/or eliminate provincial protections for endangered, threatened and special concern species in Ontario. The elimination of these protections will cause further species decline, loss of biodiversity and unpredictable impacts to food web dynamics.

Permitting and approval processes are crucial in assessing the potential negative environmental impact of a project, and the process requires essential education to ensure projects are carried out with minimal impact. Without the current permitting and approval processes or provincial oversight, there could be an increase in environmental negligence and non-compliances. The proposals eliminate vital safeguards that have been put in place over the years in recognition of their necessity for environmental and human health safety.

This is of grave concern to our community as we have hundreds of endangered species living within our territory. Additionally, our territory is situated on the Bay of Quinte where many of our people rely on the quality of its waters for drinking water, hunting and consuming fish as we have been doing for centuries.

Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte would like to note that the proposals are likely to have direct and indirect negative effects on our traditional and treaty rights through potential negative environmental impacts that would put our food for sustenance and water resources at risk.

### Concerns Regarding the Indigenous Rights and Sovereignty

Further to the environmental impacts that the changes and introductions in Bill 5 could have, our community is concerned with the threats that these changes and introductions pose to our rights as Indigenous peoples.

After many years of leading in stewardship by example, education, and advocacy, Canadian and provincial laws are beginning to recognize the value of our traditional knowledge as Indigenous peoples, especially when it comes to caring for the environment. Our rights as Indigenous people to be consulted and accommodated in projects that will impact our traditional territories has been affirmed in Canada's highest court. Additionally, the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, has been enshrined into Canadian law with the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Bill 5, *Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025*, if passed, will:

1. Potentially bypass, and therefore undermine, the Duty to Consult in interest of economic gain.
2. Violates the principle of Free Prior and Informed Consent as required by the UNDRIP, which Canada and Ontario have both committed to implement.
3. Weakened oversight of mining activities under the Mining Act.

Not only are our rights as Indigenous people inherent, but they have also been affirmed in Canadian law. Bill 5, as it is currently proposed, threatens these inherent and Constitutionally recognized rights. In reducing government review and oversight on development projects, the proposed amendments ignore the legal obligation for Ontario and proponents to consult and accommodate First Nations.

### Concerns Regarding Ontario Powers

Our final concern is regarding the seemingly unilateral decisions and exemptions that Ontario is proposing. Though we have our own laws as Haudenosaunee, our laws and teachings have a value that is shared with Canada's laws; no one is above the law, everyone is equal under the law. This is a value that is integral to democracy. Our people have been acting under a democratic system for centuries which is one of the reasons why we are so concerned with Bill 5 and its proposed changes and additions.

Bill 5, *Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025*, if passed, will:

1. Avoid public accountability by seeking to shield government decisions from civil liability.
2. Allow Ontario to make exemptions for proponents by bypassing provincial and local laws and regulations.
3. Allows Cabinet to make extensive changes without legislative scrutiny.

As a First Nation, with Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and with a Nation-to-Nation relationship with Canada and Ontario, we are concerned that Ontario is proposing changes that would make itself and the other named parties exempt from legal recourse and would allow itself and the named parties to

make decisions without consulting experts in the field, including Indigenous peoples. We are also concerned, as noted above, that the Bill will allow Cabinet to make extensive changes to laws unilaterally, without the review and scrutiny of the public. These changes go directly against the heart of Rule of Law which is meant to protect citizens.


### Concluding Remarks

Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte are of the opinion that Bill 5 would remove many of the most meaningful protections that safeguard our environment, human health, and Indigenous rights. Bill 5 undermines tremendous, necessary progress made in environmental protection and Indigenous rights recognition and marks a regression that is not in the interest of our seven generations to come.

In solidarity with the Chiefs of Ontario and the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte call for a pause on the advancement of this legislation and call for the Province of Ontario to meaningfully partner and engage with First Nations leadership across the province on the issues raised in the Bill and the future of economic growth and stability in the province.

The above shall not be construed so as to derogate from or abrogate any inherent, Aboriginal, treaty, constitutional, or legal rights of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.

Sincerely,



R. Donald Maracle, Chief  
Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte

Cc: The Honourable Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, [andrea.khanjin@pc.ola.org](mailto:andrea.khanjin@pc.ola.org)  
Ms. Marit Stiles, Leader of the Official Opposition, [mstiles-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:mstiles-co@ndp.on.ca)  
Mr. Mike Schreiner, Leader, Green Part of Ontario, [mschreiner-co@ola.org](mailto:mschreiner-co@ola.org)  
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**Tyendinaga Mohawk Council**

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**Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte**

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