

January 15, 2019

Michael Helfinger
Intergovernmental Policy Coordination Unit
900 Bay Street, Hearst Block
7th Floor
Toronto ON M6H 4L1

Dear Mr Helfinger,

Re: Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018 ("Bill 66")

Friends of Muskoka (FOM) has serious concerns with two Schedules of proposed Bill 66 – Schedules 5 and 10 – which we believe will facilitate development that could cause irreparable damage to the environment that drives the economy in the District of Muskoka.

FOM is a not-for-profit corporation with approximately 4,000 supporters across the District of Muskoka, including year-round residents and seasonal residents. We are a volunteer organization, working to preserve and protect the natural environment and unique character of Muskoka by promoting responsible use and development of its land and lakes.

In Muskoka, the environment IS the economy since millions of people come to Muskoka and invest here because of its clean lakes, rivers, forests and natural character. To emphasize the obvious, 90% of the District's tax base is dependent on preserving Muskoka's delicate environment.

Schedule 10 would facilitate development that ignores bylaws and policies in the official plans of the District of Muskoka and its 6 towns/townships, as well as the Provincial Policy Statement 2014, that have been carefully and thoughtfully developed over time in order to ensure sustainable and responsible development. Without these controls and an opportunity for all stakeholders to have input, developers would be free to plunder our environment in their pursuit of a return on investment without regard to good planning practices, and ignore environmental safeguards that currently protect Muskoka's greatest asset - its lakes and shorelines.

We believe Schedules 5 and 10 as written represent short term thinking that could permanently damage a fragile environment, which would have irreversible negative longer term implications for Muskoka's economy and jobs.

Public input on development proposals has been a key means of informing our governing councillors and planners about the impact of development proposals. We have witnessed this

first-hand on numerous occasions where public input has informed Council in a manner that led them to make a different decision than initially recommended by their planning staff. By eliminating advance public notice of open-for-business development proposals, Schedule 10 is removing a valuable source of information for municipal government to consider in their decisions.

Muskoka's environment is already under threat from unsustainable development, with an increasing number of toxic blue-green algae blooms in its lakes that make the lake water poisonous for drinking and swimming. Water filtration systems are ineffective at destroying the toxins. Last summer your government announced it was making \$5 million investment to ensure the protection of the Muskoka watershed. This is very much in keeping with Conservative values of protecting our natural assets; however, Schedules 5 and 10 are inconsistent with these values.

Although we support cutting unnecessary government 'red-tape' and job creation, FOM believes that Schedules 5 and 10 are a short-sighted approach – allowing developers to ignore environmental protections will only hurt our economy that is driven by the environment.

FOM also has serious concerns with the negative implications of Schedules 5 and 10 on the water supply, farmland and greenspaces across Ontario generally, and the undemocratic manner in which they would permit municipal governments to exclude the public from development discussions.

The Ontario public cares deeply about clean air, clean water and our natural spaces. We expect no less from our government -- especially one that promised early in its mandate to 'come down heavy' on polluters. Voters in Muskoka and Parry Sound have returned an Ontario Conservative MPP for the last 19 years and for 66 of the past 74 years (and a federal Conservative MP for the last 12 years). An environmental problem tied to Bill 66 would put future Conservative success in jeopardy.

We urge you to remove Schedules 5 and 10 from Bill 66.

Sincerely,

Laurie Thomson
President, Friends of Muskoka

Don Lang
Chair, Friends of Muskoka

Friends of Muskoka

Protecting our lakes from harm.



- cc.
- John Klinck, District of Muskoka Chair
 - Phil Harding, Mayor, Township of Muskoka Lakes
 - Township of Muskoka Lakes Councillors Barbara Bridgeman, Allen Edwards, Donelda Hayes, Frank Jaglowitz, Peter Kelly, Susan Mazan, Ruth-Ellen Nishikawa, Gordon Roberts, Glenn Zavitz
 - Peter Koetsier, Mayor, Township of Georgian Bay
 - Terry Glover, Mayor, Township of Lake of Bays
 - Graydon Smith, Mayor, Town of Bracebridge
 - Paul Kelly, Mayor, Town of Gravenhurst
 - Scott Aitchison, Mayor, Town of Huntsville
 - Norm Miller, MPP Muskoka - Parry Sound
 - David Pink, Director of Planning, Township of Muskoka Lakes
 - Samantha Hastings, Commissioner Community and Planning Services, District of Muskoka
 - Summer Valentine, Director of Planning, District of Muskoka

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