

*Mayor Bevilacqua & Vaughan Council Members*

I wish to express my concerns and strong opposition towards Schedule 10 of Bill 66, which introduces "Open-for-business by-laws". Bill 66 aims to stimulate business investments, create suitable jobs, and make Ontario more competitive by cutting "unnecessary" and "inefficient" regulations. However, if the bill is passed it would circumvent many laws and regulations that are critical in supporting protection of water, natural heritage, farmland and human health and well-being within Ontario.

Under the guise of cutting red tape, Schedule 10 of Bill 66 affects every municipality of Ontario. "Open-for-business by-laws" would take precedence over municipal official plans, and can bypass legal requirements that currently ensure fair, consistent, and transparent public engagement for decisions made within our communities. They also present industries with a back door to develop properties, on long protected natural areas without public notice or meetings. "Open-for-business by-laws" would override conservational and agricultural protections, threatening two million acres of natural areas and farmland to be developed on/for urban sprawl across the Greenbelt. Bill 66 would affect important natural habitat including wetlands and woodlands for species at risk across Ontario set out in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) under the Planning Act. Bill 66 also proposes to repeal the Toxics Reduction act, which requires industrial facilities to monitor and reduce their emissions of toxic chemicals, producing substances in air, land, water and consumer products. This not only threatens wildlife and ecological health through increased exposure to toxic chemicals, but impacts freshwater systems such as Lake Simcoe watershed, and threatens existing and future sources of municipal drinking water. If Bill 66 is passed, industry will be able to bypass the drinking water source protections under the Clean Water Act. This would weaken critical policies passed in response to the Walkerton tragedy, in which contaminated drinking water killed seven people and made thousands of people ill. "Open-for-business by-laws" threaten human health as they would lower requirements affecting proper management of landfills, sewage systems, and improper handling of fuel, manure, and pesticides, all of which could heavily impact drinking water across Ontario. Finally, Schedule 10 includes policies that remove protections under the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, the Clean Water Act, the Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine Acts, Places to Grow Act, and Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) under the Planning Act, heavily affecting our environmental health.

"Open-for-business by-laws" of Bill 66, would turn back the clock in numerous years of good planning, community input, and strong leadership from previous Progressive Conservative and Liberal governments. They would sidestep laws and policies intended to protect the long-term health and resilience of our communities and their residents, including impacts to vulnerable natural landscapes and to water resources that we rely on. In the long run, Bill 66 would undermine efforts to make Ontario communities more livable, sustainable, and resilient, overriding policies that support active transportation, affordable housing, green infrastructure and climate resiliency, therefore, leaving citizens without recourse. Please remove Schedule 10 from Bill 66.

*Submitted by Noreen Lee*

Email. [REDACTED]