

January 18, 2019



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Senior Policy Advisor  
Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade  
Business Climate and Funding Administration Division  
Policy Coordination and Business Climate Branch  
900 Bay Street, Hearst Block 7th Floor  
Toronto, ON M7A 2E1

Ken Petersen  
Provincial Planning Policy Branch  
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
777 Bay Street, 13th floor  
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Dear Mr. Helfinger and Mr. Petersen,

RE: 013-4293 Bill 66: Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018

BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association is writing to express our opposition to Bill 66, *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018*, and our concerns over its far-reaching impacts on the people of Ontario. The proposed legislation dismantles decades of environmental policy advancements, defies sound planning practices, and undermines transparent public engagement in decision-making.

Bill 66 allows municipalities to pass "open-for-business" zoning by-laws that over-ride Ontario's key planning laws and policies that provide protection for drinking water, farmland, natural heritage and human health.

Under the proposed legislation, the "open-for-business" by-laws do not have to comply with the following statutes:

- Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015;
- Greenbelt Act, 2005;
- Lake Simcoe Protection Act, 2008;
- Metrolinx Act, 2006;
- Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001;

- Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994;
- Places to Grow Act, 2005;
- Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016; and
- any other prescribed provision in provincial legislation

These policies were put in place over decades of hard work, public consultation, and feedback from communities across Ontario. They have played a vital role in protecting our municipal drinking water, preserving our food security and curbing urban sprawl.

Furthermore, “open-for-business” by-laws could be passed without any prior public notice or meetings and could not be appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, leaving communities vulnerable to changing municipal councils and the strong influence of the development community.

Now, more than ever before, Ontario needs to take strong action on climate change. Aligning planning and policy tools to advance smart and complete communities that support active transportation, affordable housing, green infrastructure and enhance the protection of two-million acres of natural areas and farmland across the Greenbelt, must be a top priority and a demonstrated government commitment. We are disappointed that the Province is introducing legislation that reverses these policy directions, and instead adopts a reckless approach to land-use planning and decision-making that sets the stage for property tax increases to subsidize economically inefficient sprawl development, and puts our health at risk by compromising our drinking water.

We have been encouraged by the public outcry over Bill 66, and we applaud the communities that have voiced their strong opposition. Municipalities including Burlington, Oakville, Hamilton, Toronto, Sudbury, Waterloo, Kitchener, Wilmot, Guelph, Aurora, Bradford, Mulmur, Ajax, Wellesley, Puslinch, Whitchurch Stouffville, and Barrie have expressed grave concerns over the implications of Bill 66. Many have indicated the presence of significant employment land surpluses within their respective municipalities, undermining the Province’s reasoning in introducing this controversial legislation.

We urge the provincial government not to proceed with Bill 66. We ask that the government instead prioritizes policy and planning tools that address the threat of climate change, and work with communities to increase their climate resilience and climate adaptation preparedness. Climate change is the biggest threat facing

Ontario, and it is the responsibility of the provincial government to address this threat using all the tools and resources at its disposal. We trust that our concerns will be duly considered by the Ontario government, and we look forward to the outcomes of the public consultation process.

Sincerely,

Marwa Selim

On behalf of the BurlingtonGreen Advocacy Team

Program Manager & Advocacy Coordinator  
BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association

CC: Jane McKenna, MPP, Burlington