



# Quinte Field Naturalists

*The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is affiliated with Ontario Nature, a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research.*

January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Dear Premier Ford,

We the members of the Quinte Field Naturalists, are extremely concerned about Bill 66 – Restoring Ontario's Competiveness Act. The Planning Act, Clean Water Act, Great Lakes Protection Act, Greenbelt Act, Lake Simcoe Protection Act, Oak Ridges Moraine Act and Places to Grow Act, were all enacted to help protect environmental and human health. They need to be maintained in their current format.

Caring about human health and about the environment which provides us with a home and the essentials for healthy living is a very important responsibility of government. It is essential to have standardized requirements and regulations for environmental and human health across the province so that all Ontario residents and ecosystems are treated equally, expectations are the same and provincial comparisons can be made. Good science is conducted only within the context of regulated processes. To allow open-for-business by-laws, by-laws that may differ significantly from municipality to municipality, to circumvent fundamental protections for environmental and human health is very concerning. This backward step would cause ecosystem damage, a definite reflection of a lessening concern for environmental health at a time when the importance of the environment and its protection is being increasingly appreciated world-wide. Such action potentially will endanger public health in areas such as drinking water protection.

Permitting citizens who live in the great variety of ecosystems across Ontario to have a voice in what takes place in their surroundings is a strategy used by responsible governments. We now have laws and policies that were passed or updated with extensive public consultation. Bill 66 threatens to override key planning laws and policies, putting in jeopardy health and environmental protection. Public consultation is a basic tenet of democracy: we are concerned to see this process devalued by Bill 66.

The implications for damage to the environment and public health loom large. We only have to consider what might happen if provisions in the Greenbelt Act and the Oak Ridges Moraine Act were not upheld. These two Acts protect source water for many citizens of Southern Ontario!

The role of the Ontario Government should be to provide consistency in environmental and public health protection across the province, not to fragment and erode consistency. We, the members of Quinte Field Naturalists, strongly urge the government of this great province to consider our perspective, a responsible caring approach to the preservation of all life in this province. Bill 66 should not be implemented!

Sincerely,

George W. Thomson  
Quinte Field Naturalists' President