Comments on the Proposed Bill 66 (Environmental): Schedule 5

Thanks to a workshop hosted by Environment Hamilton at Knox Presbyterian Church in Dundas on January 15th, 2019, I am better informed about the environmentally destructive powers of the proposed Bill 66 (Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act, introduced in the Legislature on December 6th 2018) and the ways in which individual citizens and environmental groups can voice their opposition. As pointed out by EH staff, Bill 66 will open up Ontario’s Greenbelt for industrial, commercial and residential development (Greenbelt Act, 2005), undermine drinking water regulations (Clean Water Act), and regulations aimed to reduce the amount of toxic chemicals that industries are allowed to release into the atmosphere (Toxics Reduction Act).

I share the general concerns expressed by various local and provincial environmental conservation groups, including Environment Hamilton, the Hamilton Naturalists’ Club, the Toronto Field Naturalists, Nature Ontario, Environmental Defence, and the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

The following comments focus on Schedule 5 of the proposed legislation, which would repeal the *Toxics Reduction Act, 2009*. The purposes of this Act are,

(a) to prevent pollution and protect human health and the environment by reducing the use and creation of toxic substances; and

(b) to inform Ontarians about toxic substances.

This Act currently requires certain industrial facilities (belonging to a class prescribed in the regulations) to develop “toxic substance reduction plans” to reduce the use or generation of toxic substances within their production processes. Emissions from manufacturing and mineral processing operations are major contributors to greenhouse gases, which in turn contribute to global warming. There are now dire warnings from scientists around the world of the consequences of *not* drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions. That the current Conservative government would even consider removing regulations aimed at reducing pollution is *completely unacceptable and irresponsible under the circumstances*. It is a giant step backward in the development of provincial strategies to combat global warming.

I therefore *strongly oppose* Schedule 5 of Bill 66.