



November 30, 2022

To: The Standing Committee of Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*
and the following EROs:

ERO #	Ministry	Topic
<u>019-6160</u>	Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry	Wetland Evaluation System
<u>019-6161</u>	Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry	Natural Heritage
<u>019-6163</u>	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing	Planning Act & City of Toronto Act
<u>019-6172</u>	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing	Planning & Development Charges Act
<u>019-6141</u>	Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry	Conservation authorities
<u>019-2927</u>	Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry	Natural hazards
<u>019-6173</u>	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing	Inclusionary zoning
<u>019-6197</u>	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing	Additional residential units

We are providing comments on Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, and the specific EROs that are listed above. Although we agree that the Government of Ontario needs to address the housing crisis in Ontario, we do not believe that Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, is a prudent way to proceed. In particular, the provisions of Bill 23 should only apply to urban areas in Southern Ontario with serviced land. Bill 23 should not apply to lands that have no municipal sanitary sewer or water supply services (un-serviced lands), those parts of Central Ontario that are on the Canadian Shield, and all of Northern Ontario (particularly shoreline properties in these areas).

We also confirm our agreement and support for the attached November 15, 2022 submission from the Canadian Environmental Law Association to the Bill 23 Standing Committee.

The Georgian Bay Association (GBA) is an umbrella organization for 18 community associations along the east and north shores of Georgian Bay, representing approximately 3,000 families. We have been advocating on behalf of our land-owning members for over 100 years and estimate that we reach and influence around 30,000 residents of this Georgian Bay area. Our mandate is to work with our water-based communities and other stakeholders to ensure the careful stewardship of the greater Georgian Bay environment.

Georgian Bay, in particular the eastern and northern shores, has the following features which makes it unique within the Great Lakes system and emphasizes why this area needs careful protection:

- The eastern shore is a UNESCO designated Biosphere Reserve recognized as having international significance.
- Together, the eastern and northern shores and waters (including the eastern end of the North Channel of Lake Huron, known as the Bay of Islands) contain the largest global freshwater archipelago (~35,000 islands).
- This area has the largest biodiversity of amphibians and reptiles in Canada and one of the largest in the world.
- In addition, there is a substantive biodiversity of other aquatic biota, land-based fauna, birds, insects and flora.
- The islands and shore of this area have a collective shoreline of 10,000 kms, which is longer than the collective shoreline of all the other Great Lakes combined.
- In this area 53 of Ontario's species at risk and endangered species are in fact thriving;
- The ~19,000 wetlands in this area and the nearby watershed is more extensive, more biologically significant and more diverse than all of the wetlands in all of the other Great Lakes;
- These wetlands, and the extent to which they filter water, are a vital component in maintaining good water quality both in Georgian Bay, Lakes Huron and Michigan and downstream through the Great Lakes system and are recognized as one of the most ecologically important wetlands systems in Canada and internationally; and
- Communities around Georgian Bay, including the 12 First Nations, all share a passionate devotion to protecting the environment.

Our primary concerns are as follows:

Changes to remove the Right of a Third Party to Appeal Decisions to the Tribunal

Many of our member associations engage in municipal planning matters and have regularly appealed planning decisions that push the boundaries of good planning and development that is respectful of the environment. The government's proposal to remove the rights of taxpayers and land owners to appeal certain planning decisions, removes one of the checks and balances in the system holding staff and councils accountable for upholding their policies and ensuring that the environment, on which we depend, is protected for future generations. We ask that third party appeal rights be restored for all planning decisions.

Changes to the Ontario Land Tribunal procedures

GBA opposes the proposed changes to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) procedures that would assign costs to an unsuccessful party, as it will discourage municipalities from opposing development applications at the Ontario Land Tribunal. Our member associations and their members reside in the five coastal municipalities along the north and east coasts of Georgian Bay. Small rural municipalities like this have limited staff and resources and adding to potential OLT hearings costs could impact municipal budgets significantly and ultimately its taxpayers. We are concerned that these changes may harm a municipality's ability to properly uphold planning regulations and maintain their local planning principles, which could lead to environmental impacts and impair the natural land and waterscapes in Georgian Bay, including the Biosphere Reserve.

Changes to site plan controls

In our area of Georgian Bay every island or lot is unique, and, since almost all consist of one residential unit, careful siting of all structures, particularly septic systems, is essential to protect water quality and to avoid impacting sensitive habitat. Site plan control is therefore an important tool for municipalities to preserve the integrity of planning regulations, ensure compliance with those regulations, and avoid potential negative environmental impacts. We are concerned that the changes to site plan controls that would exempt developments of up to 10 residential units from site plan control, and the removal of architectural details and landscape design aesthetics from the scope of site plan control would remove this essential oversight for our area of Georgian Bay. On the Canadian Shield where existing overburden can be scarce, maintaining existing vegetation and buffer zones is important for phosphorous uptake from septic systems.

Changes to subdivisions approvals

GBA oppose changes that remove the public meetings requirement from applications for approval of a draft plan of subdivision. Public and community participation in planning regulations and decisions is a central tenet of the principles of the Planning Act and ensure that the community's wishes for the character and future of their community are heard. Public consultations are critical in this respect and should not be ignored or abandoned.

Allowance of multiple residential units per lot

GBA opposes permitting of up to three residential units per lot (two in the main building and one in an accessory building) as of right, with no minimum unit sizes. It is not clear whether that proposal only applies to areas with municipal services in place. Limiting the number of residential units (main buildings and accessory buildings) helps prevent over development and undue pressure on low/minimal services that exist in the Georgian Bay area, which is environmentally sensitive, sparsely populated and predominantly consists of un-serviced land. We seek confirmation that this provision will only apply to serviced land, as it is completely inappropriate and unworkable on un-serviced land, particularly waterfront properties.

Changes to the Development Charges Act

The proposed overall reduction in maximum development charges applicable to all development may have the unintended consequences of stalling the building of critical infrastructure and shifting the financial burden of growth-related infrastructure needs on to existing municipal taxpayers. Developers should pay for their associated infrastructure

development needs. The burden should not be placed on the taxpayers who will not benefit from it.

Changes to the Natural Heritage planning

We believe language on the “net positive impact” that might allow for wetlands, and other natural areas, to be developed is unclear and allows for excessive uncertainty on wetlands protection. This is very concerning because of the Georgian Bay environments' extensive wetland system and other sensitive habitat that provides countless ecosystem benefits to all sentient things - including people.

Removal of Conservation Authorities' powers

GBA is concerned with restricting the powers of Conservation Authorities and limiting them to erosion and flooding control. Conservation Authorities have an important role to play in source water protection and wetlands that should remain as a key priority. Removing their ability to provide comments beyond natural hazards and flooding would under-utilize their expertise and dispose of much needed and necessary oversight that could lead to problems with water quality.

Changes to Ontario Wetland Evaluation System

GBA opposes the proposed changes to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System. The Georgian Bay ecosystem has significantly important coastal wetlands that contribute to the biodiversity of the area and provide varying ecosystem services, as summarized above. We are concerned that these changes will diminish the ecological value of wetland systems, in particular:

- No longer recognizing or considering wetland complexes (hydrological connections)
- No longer recognizing species at risk in the evaluation process
- Removing provincial government oversight of the evaluation process

As set out above, Georgian Bay is home to ~19,000 wetlands and 53 species at risk and endangered species and provides extensive ecosystem services, which must be protected, particularly as part of the Biosphere Reserve.

Timeline for public consultation

The timeline for public consultation is short relative to the substance and ramifications of the proposed changes. The Government of Ontario should allow for reasonable periods for comment that allows for effective public comment and consultation. This process is essential to gathering useful input from the public and hearing public concerns. The current process undermines the effectiveness of the process for obtaining the input of the public. Accordingly, strong consideration should be given to extending the public consultation timelines.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act*, and taking the time to read and understand our concerns. We would be pleased to discuss our concerns and answer any questions.