



Ontario Museum Association - Submission on Bill 23

December 8, 2022

The Honourable Michael Ford
Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism
56 Wellesley St. 14th Floor
Toronto, ON
M7A 1C1

The Honourable Neil Lumsden
Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport
438 University Ave. 6th Floor
Toronto, ON
M5G 2K8

Re: Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (ERO #019-6196)

Dear Ministers,

We are writing to provide comments on proposed changes under Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022.

The more than 700 museums, galleries, and historic sites across the province are located in every community—urban, rural, Northern, Indigenous, east and west—and serve as vital community-building infrastructure. Museums are heritage assets, key to education, employment, economic development, tourism, culture, and equity. As trusted public institutions, museums foster social wellbeing and visitor engagement through high-quality, authentic experiences and connections. Museums play a vital role in rebuilding and reconnecting Ontario, both socially and economically.

The Ontario Museum Association (OMA) calls on the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism and the government for legislation that ensures Ontario's irreplaceable heritage is protected. The OMA calls to maintain all possible protections for heritage assets, including through the Ontario Heritage Act, and calls for support of heritage designation with broad applicability for the stewardship of valuable heritage assets and museums across the province. The OMA discourages proposed changes to existing protections (listing and designation under the Ontario Heritage Act and the Standards and Guidelines for heritage Properties) as these changes may put at risk museums and the important places that are part of the heritage of diverse communities across Ontario.

Bill 23 proposes changes to the Planning Act and Development Charges Act that substantially threaten the essential support provided to museums by municipalities. Municipalities contribute the largest amount of funding for community museums and are vital to their sustainability. The Province must protect the level of operational funding provided.



There is recognized responsibility of government to protect heritage assets held in the public trust and to maintain public confidence. The museum and heritage community stands ready to provide expertise and experience to ensure legislative changes are community-driven in the service of all Ontarians, and protect sustainable funding for museums.

Ontarians value the presence of museums in their communities; they improve quality of life—this public value drives investments in preservation and revitalization made by individuals, the private sector and governments. Museums deliver a social return on investment that makes our communities vibrant and vital places to live, work, visit and invest now and in the future.

Bill 23 jeopardizes Ontario's potential to offer a variety of distinct places and experiences that attract local, provincial, national and international tourism.

Museums across Ontario preserve and promote local history and heritage and exist in service of their communities. Many community objects, collections and stories are preserved and interpreted in museums, heritage buildings, landscapes and districts, through the efforts of volunteer groups and dedicated professionals. These the community-driven organizations are invested in revitalizing the places in which they live. **Broad availability of heritage listing and designation, under the Ontario Heritage Act, is an important tool for our communities to maintain and enhance vital infrastructure and assets for the future.** For community groups, this is an important economic tool that can increase their public profile and visibility, and help them raise funds. Also of great concern are any changes that will negatively impact natural and cultural heritage in places like conservation areas and the Greenbelt.

As challenges of the pandemic persist, it is essential that existing tools, like designation, are more applicable to more places, and not reduced. Ontario Heritage Act related changes proposed in Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act (2022), would impose new pressures and unnecessary administrative hurdles. Reduced ability to designate heritage places limits the potential for more communities to receive the benefits of museums and other community assets. Protecting broad availability of heritage designation helps our communities maintain a sense of place, enhance social well-being and offers access to benefits of culture, heritage, and local vitality.

About the Ontario Museum Association:

The Ontario Museum Association (OMA) was established in 1972 and has a mission to strengthen capacity among institutions and individuals to build a strong, collaborative and inclusive museum sector that is vital to community life and the well-being of Ontarians, especially as we reconnect and rebuild post-pandemic. Ontario museums contribute to:

Economic Development:

- An estimated \$1.6 Billion in total economic value annually. For every \$1 spent on museum operations, museums deliver a \$3.70 return on-investment.
- As vital local tourism assets in every community across the province, museums support the province's \$36-billion tourism industry.
- Museums are assets for the province's film and TV industry, which contributes almost \$3 billion to Ontario's economy in production spending (2022).
- Museums employ 11,000 skilled workers in their local areas and assist municipalities in attracting skilled workers of all types.
- 37,000 volunteers contribute more than 2.5 million hours a year to museums, galleries and historic sites across Ontario.

Education:

- Museums are key assets to the province's educational system, with usual formal school visits contributing \$600 million in value to the province each year. Before pandemic-related closures, Ontario museums were recording 113 Million online visits per year—nearly 4 per second.

Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility:

- As trusted public institutions, museums have a role in fostering social wellbeing and building better communities across the province.
- As community hubs and vital infrastructure, especially in smaller places, museums provide access to the benefits of culture, heritage, and local vitality.
- Skilled museum workers interpret the diverse and multifaceted stories that make up our shared heritage, rooted in their connections to their communities and objects in their collections.

Conclusion:

Despite ongoing pandemic challenges, museums have exhibited resilience and delivered valuable engagement with their communities—and with adequate and stabilizing government support they can continue.

Part of this support includes legislation, policies and practices that make the work of the museum sector possible. Legislation that fosters the stewardship and protection of heritage assets—museums, architecture, districts and landscapes— means that more places across Ontario benefit from museums and community infrastructure. Ontarians benefit, now and in the future, when museums are better able to make vibrant and vital places to live, work, visit and invest.

Proposed changes to existing protections (listing and designation under the Ontario Heritage Act) as these changes may put at risk museums and the important places that are part of the heritage of diverse communities across Ontario. Reduced ability to formally list, designate and preserve heritage assets limits the possibility for more Ontarians to benefit from these places.

Bill 23 proposes changes to the Planning Act and Development Charges Act that substantially threaten the essential support provided to museums by municipalities. Municipalities contribute the largest amount of funding for community museums and are vital to their sustainability. The Province must protect the level of operational funding provided.

Protecting heritage places across Ontario also means that museums and community organizations can be stronger partners in the implementation of government strategies, with greater combined impact, to fully contribute to our province's recovery and future success.

Sincerely,



Cathy Molloy
President
Ontario Museum Association