



Quinte Field Naturalists

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

May 13, 2025

Dear Premier Ford, Minister Todd McCarthy, MPP Tyler Allsopp, MPP Ric Bresee,

Quinte Field Naturalists (QFN) is an organization dedicated to nature education, research and conservation. With these goals in mind, QFNs 170 members strive to teach others and to implement projects that will protect our natural heritage and ensure the biodiversity of our surroundings and beyond. Planet Earth is a vast network of ecosystems, all of which contribute to the wellbeing of all life. QFN is concerned that Bill 5 has the potential to destroy our natural surroundings and ultimately to negatively impact the quality of all life in Ontario. Ecosystems provide a variety of essential functions that support human societies and economies: there is a vast price to pay if we interfere with their operations. Our healthy food and water supply can be affected adversely and climate regulation can be disrupted, leading to an increasing number of natural disasters.

QFN opposes the creation of the 'Special Economic Zones' proposed in Bill 5, which give power to companies or individuals allowing them exemption from municipal and provincial laws in any place, even provincial parks. Such zones will lay the foundation for the degradation of many of our natural resources. Environmentally friendly development requires everyone planning and working together to make choices that support life and a positive future. Both Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy and the National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan emphasize collaboration. Creating Economic Zones and implementing projects in isolation are contradictory to practices that have the potential to reverse damage already done in our environment and to prevent future destruction. Partnerships focusing on common goals that benefit all life are the solution. It is important to act now, given that the climate is warming and biodiversity is our greatest natural defense against climate change.

All life has basic needs that must be met. Bill 5 weakens, potentially destroys, the challenge of meeting the requirements of life. Let's consider, for example, the need for everyone to have sufficient healthy food. It is concerning that Ontario is losing 319 acres of farmland every day. The creation of Economic Zones puts farmland under even more threat. In the face of a global trade war, Ontario can't afford to lose any more of its farming sector and ability to produce our own food.

QFN opposes Bill 5's attempt to undermine the Endangered Species Act. Bill 5 is a vehicle which threatens to roll back key protections for species at risk and habitats on which they depend. If passed, it will weaken the very laws that prevent species from facing extinction. From drastically weakening permitting processes and definitions of what harms a species, to redefining what a species habitat is, there are huge implications for Ontario's wildlife. The proposed actions are not science-based.

QFN cannot support major changes to the Mining Act which give power to override Environmental Reviews and due process. This action exposes all ecosystems to great danger: we think immediately of Ontario's peatlands situated in the Hudson Bay Lowlands, which is the world's second largest peatland complex. Even though peatlands cover only 3% of the planet's surface, they store 20-30% of Earth's CO2. If this major ecosystem service was disrupted, the cost to life and to comfortable living would be great. Furthermore, QFN has major concerns about the exemption of archeological assessments which often trigger the duty to consult with Indigenous communities. Indigenous people have a deep value of the natural world and are a wonderful resource that cannot be ignored.

QFN urges your government not to proceed with Bill 5. Please uphold quality LIFE for ALL!

Sincerely,

Dr. Elizabeth Churcher
QFN Corresponding Secretary