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Another Twist Of the Knife for Conservation Authorities from the Ontario Government

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE and ONTARIO NATURE

Ontario government's proposed amendments to Bill 229, Schedule 6 are a shocking escalation of attacks on public safety, natural values and safe drinking water

Toronto, Ont. – The Ontario government will today bring forward amendments to its proposed legislation that attacks Conservation Authorities, which will allow the provincial government to order dangerous development projects to proceed against the science-based decisions of Conservation Authorities in a manner that threatens public safety and environmental values all across the province.

These new, and never previously discussed, amendments expressly force Conservation Authorities to issue permits for development, even if it will cause flooding or erosion and jeopardize human health and safety, if the government issues a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO). They also force Conservation Authorities to accept and implement "pay to slay" agreements with developers to allow natural values to be wiped off the landscape for a fee.

This proposal appears to be aimed specifically at retroactively forcing the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to issue a permit for the destruction of 50 per cent of the provincially significant Lower Duffins Creek coastal wetland complex against the Authority's stated opposition. The MZO issued for this development is being challenged in court by Ecojustice on behalf of Ontario Nature and Environmental Defence.

"The provincial government is circumventing the planning process and shutting down public consultation and now they are ending the ability of any

“nuisance” bodies like Conservation Authorities to apply laws that protect wetlands, floodplains and source water protection areas,” said Caroline Schultz of Ontario Nature.

“After hearing articulate and sustained opposition from tens of thousands of Ontarians, all 36 Conservation Authorities, farmers and almost every municipality in the province, this government has decided to double down and legislate a requirement for Conservation Authorities to put the public at risk and destroy our future to make a few developers rich,” said Tim Gray of Environmental Defence.

Environment Defence and Ontario Nature reiterate that Schedule 6 must be withdrawn before this budget bill is passed, and full public consultations on how to enhance the ability of Conservation Authorities to protect public safety and the environment in a time of climate crisis must be held.

About ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE (www.environmentaldefence.ca):

Environmental Defence is a leading Canadian environmental advocacy organization that works with government, industry and individuals to defend clean water, a safe climate and healthy communities

Ontario Nature protects wild species and wild spaces through conservation, education and public engagement. Ontario Nature is a charitable organization representing more than 30,000 members and supporters, and more than 150 member groups across Ontario.

A backgrounder on the amendments to Schedule 6 is [available here](#).

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