

May 10, 2012

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Legislative Building
Room 281
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier McGuinty,

We, the undersigned, would like to voice our deep concern about Bill 55, the *Strong Action for Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2012* and to request that you withdraw all schedules amending environmental legislation from the bill. Bill 55 obstructs the public's right to participate in environmental decision-making by circumventing the statutory process for public consultation that is normally guaranteed under the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993*. In so doing it erodes government accountability, transparency and environmental responsibility.

Bill 55 makes substantial changes to several environmental laws, including the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*, the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006*, the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994*, the *Public Lands Act* and the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997*. A legal analysis conducted by Ecojustice and the Canadian Environmental Law Association reveals that Bill 55 significantly undermines the level of environmental protection and public oversight of natural resource use and conservation by: exempting industrial and development activities from legal requirements to protect wildlife and natural resources; broadening exemption powers; allowing the delegation of government authority to other unspecified bodies; and extending or eliminating deadlines for planning and reporting (e.g., species recovery strategies, park management plans, reports to the Legislature).

The weakening of environmental laws that were designed to protect the health of our lakes, forests and wildlife is deeply disturbing. To do so by circumventing the requirements of the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993* through omnibus legislation that denies the possibility for open public debate is very troubling. We thus fully support the recommendation of Ecojustice and the Canadian Environmental Law Association, "that the environmental statutes, particularly those related to species protection, sustainable forest operations, protected areas, lakes and rivers protection, and public lands be withdrawn from the Schedules of Bill 55." Specifically, we request the removal of Schedules 15, 19, 23, 34, 58 and 59.

In closing, we would like to assert our collective opposition to environmental deregulation and our profound disappointment in the government's approach to addressing its budgetary objectives.

Yours truly,



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Executive Director
Greenpeace



Caroline Schultz
Executive Director
Ontario Nature



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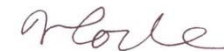
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Your connection to wildlife
Votre lien avec la faune



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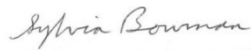
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Janet Bremner
President
Lambton Wildlife Inc.

- cc. The Honourable Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Michael Gravelle, Minister of Natural Resources
Andrea Horwath, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Ontario
Tim Hudak, Leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party