

Bill 100 won't take your land

To the Editor:

Recently there has been discussion in the media regarding the use of easements by the provincial government to secure trails. The province introduced Bill 100 - the Supporting Trails Act, 2015 - to improve access to Ontario trails, building a healthier and more prosperous Ontario.

At first, with all the confusing language of government legislation, landowners, especially those who had snowmobile trails across their property, were concerned that they would have no control over their property because of the proposed easements.

Michael Coteau, Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Sport, recently stated that "an easement pursuant to Bill 100, if passed, would be voluntary agreement between a landowner and an eligible body or bodies. No property owner would be compelled to provide an easement unless they agreed to do so."

For decades now, snowmobile trails have existed through partnerships between individual landowners and their local snowmobile club utilizing written agreements.

These land use permission agreements adequately define land use parameters, including landowner cancellation authority and notice, and ensure that the OFSC's general liability insurance protects the landowner.

The OFSC and our member organizations do not have any intention of utilizing easements, preferring rather to use the traditional time-tested land use agreement process which has and continues to serve landowners and clubs well.

All landowners will be asked by their respective snowmobile clubs to sign a new Land Use Permission agreement that states "the landowner/occupier by signing this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is NOT requesting nor granting permission for a registered easement over designated premises."

Please contact your local snowmobile club executive for more details.

Control of your land is still yours by law.

Margaret Elliott

Director, Old Hastings Snow Riders