

Bill 66 would nullify many Ontario laws and protections

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To the Editor,

Premier Doug Ford lied to us, prior to being elected he promised not to touch the Greenbelt and after a mere six months in office he has reneged on that promise with the proposed Bill 66.

In a video that emerged during the provincial election, Ford is shown to propose "we open up the Greenbelt. Not all of it, but ? a big chunk of it." Ford responded to public outcry by clearly retracting the proposal. Ford said in a news conference, "the people have spoken. I'm going to listen to them. They don't want me to touch the Greenbelt, we won't touch the Greenbelt."

So much for that with the proposed Bill 66.

This is just the beginning. Ford's campaign promise of a "government for the people," already begs the question, what people? It is looking like Ford's developer friends are the people.

On Thursday, Dec. 6, 2018, just prior to Doug Ford's government adjourning Ontario's Parliament until Feb. 19, 2019, Premier Doug Ford introduced ?Bill 66, an Act to restore competitiveness in Ontario.? The intended goal is to ?cut red tape? to shorten the bureaucratic process, hence the slogan ?Ontario Open for Business? but in reality it has the potential to do more harm than good. His idea of quantifying adults and children's health and safety, wildlife and the environment we share, as red tape holding up projects moving forward, is alarming! An example would be if Bill 66 was passed this would mean being able to bypass the Clean Water Act, which was passed in response to the Walkerton tragedy of 2000, when E. coli in the municipal water system of Walkerton, Ontario, killed seven people and sickened thousands. That is only the beginning. There is so much more.

It was no accident that Bill 66 was timed out to be introduced on Dec. 6, Ford knew most Ontarians would be distracted with Christmas and holiday preparations and festivities. As a result the magnitude of Bill 66 and its far reaching effects have not been fully realized by many people throughout Ontario.

If passed, Bill 66 would nullify a number of consumer protections, labour laws, anti-crime rules, clean water rules, child safety rules, wildlife and environmental protections in the Province of Ontario. The implications of Schedule 10 "open-for-business" would allow municipal councils to approve projects like the casino in North Bay in industrial-commercial areas previously prohibited by protective regulations and laws passed by governments of all stripes, Conservative, Liberal and NDP.

Other acts that Bill 66 would impact include the Greenbelt Act, Place to Grow Act, a law to contain urban sprawl; Great Lakes Protection Act; the law designed to protect the Great Lakes and the Toxic Reduction Act which prohibits the use of toxic substances, Lake Simcoe Protection Act, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, Endangered Species Act and the Resource Recovery, Circular Economy Act and likely others.

It took years to get these acts in place and all came about because of either a need to protect our health and safety, wildlife and/or the environment we all share. In Ford's hands down the road we may all end up leaving home every day in a hazmat suit. The proposed Bill 66 takes concern to a whole new level inviting the biggest and most significant step backwards in Ontario.

I liken this to that old saying, the devil is in the details and he has played his card!

If you do not know much about Bill 66 I would encourage you to forego your usual evening activities and google the impacts of Bill 66. There are numerous videos on YouTube to watch and/or articles to read to give you a better idea of the impact of what Ford is proposing. He didn't miss a thing, Bill 66 affects all of us!

After deciding how you feel please sign the Nature Ontario petition. This petition is very important to send a message loud and clear that Ontarians are opposed to Bill 66. A further help would be writing to your local members of parliament.

I am not an alarmist by nature but what Premier Doug Ford is proposing with all that Bill 66 encompasses is concerning. Please join me in signing the Ontario Nature petition opposing Bill 66 and share it with family and friends. If you have already signed it, thank you!

Submitted by Kelly Wallace from
the Think Turtle Conservation Initiative