

Sent by Email

June 30, 2025

The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building, Queen's Park Room 281  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1  
[premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

Subject: Opposition to Bill 5 and Request to Repeal

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The Council of The Corporation of the City of Pickering considered the above matter at a Meeting held on June 23, 2025 and adopted the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, on April 17, 2025, the Government of Ontario brought forth Bill 5: *Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025*, a broad omnibus legislation that proposes to make various changes to existing planning, consultation, approval, authority, and protection frameworks found in Provincial statutes in relation to major infrastructure, mining and resource development projects;

**And Whereas**, on June 4, 2025, Bill 5 passed its third and final reading in the Ontario legislature, but has not yet come into force;

**And Whereas**, Bill 5 granted broad powers by creating provincial “authority to designate special economic zones”, which allows for the suspension of constitutionally protected rights of Indigenous peoples and the suspension of powers of municipal governments and environmental authorities;

**And Whereas**, Bill 5 provides powers for the Province that First Nations governments in Ontario have stated would be contrary to Treaty agreements with the Crown;

**And Whereas**, amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act, 1990, fail to address systemic issues in archaeological resource management, such as delayed consultation with Indigenous communities and unilateral provincial control over Indigenous artifacts and cultural heritage. Additionally, the amendments exacerbate already weakened heritage protections brought in Report #2025-CG-7 Page 2 of 10 through Bill 23. Any exemptions under the Ontario Heritage Act could result in negative impacts, including the destruction of Indigenous artifacts and burial sites;

**And Whereas**, Bill 5 repeals the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and degrades protections for the environment and circumvents policies that have kept Ontarians safe

and healthy for decades, including regulations that prevent the contamination of Ontario's water and the means by which water contamination is identified;

**And Whereas**, the new regime for endangered species and at-risk species is designed for more flexible permitting and registry-based approvals, rather than automatic prohibitions on activities that harm listed species or their habitats. Additionally, narrowing the definition of habitat in the ESA to just the immediate area surrounding dwelling sites excludes protection of broader ecosystems that endangered and at-risk species rely on for survival. There are more than 230 species at risk in Ontario, many of which are in Durham, including numerous birds, fish, insects, reptiles and plant species. These species have experienced population declines over the past several decades and are at risk of being lost completely. While these changes could expedite development approvals, they may also reduce environmental oversight resulting in devastation to populations of endangered species;

**And Whereas**, the 'trusted proponent' model under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2025, may create a two-tier development system, favouring select private businesses with fewer regulations, thereby undermining labour standards and enabling potentially exploitative and unsafe working conditions;

**And Whereas**, Bill 5 enables the Province to override municipal authorities and planning activities without consultation or warning, including the ability to upend planning processes already long underway and future planning processes being considered or yet to be contemplated;

**And Whereas**, Bill 5 undermines the practice and spirit of democracy and a rights- based system in the Province of Ontario, and to date has garnered the public opposition of the Chiefs of Ontario, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Anishinabek Nation, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, Sandy Lake First Nation, Neskantaga First Nation, Grassy Narrows First Nation, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, Amnesty International Canada, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, World Wildlife Fund – Canada, David Suzuki Foundation, The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Ontario Biodiversity Council, Ontario Nature, Legal Advocates for Nature's Defence, Environmental Defense, Wildlands League, Wildlife Preservation Canada, Ecojustice, the Toronto Zoo, Mining Watch Canada, Democracy Watch, municipalities in Ontario, and numerous other pan-regional and local organizations across Ontario;

**Now therefore be it resolved** that the Council of The Corporation for the City of Pickering:

1. Opposes the Government of Ontario's Bill 5 due to its infringement on Indigenous rights, assignment of powers to arbitrarily override and ignore long-established areas of municipal government authorities, risks to the long- term health of important ecosystems and the environment generally,

and circumvention of numerous democratic rights and oversight responsibilities;

2. Calls upon the Government of Ontario to immediately repeal Bill 5;
3. Urges the Government of Ontario, in accordance with the recommendation of Grand Chief Joel Abram of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, to “engage in a comprehensive redrafting process with full First Nations participation” and to likewise engage with municipalities and other affected stakeholders in the same comprehensive redrafting process, maintaining a rights-based foundation, inclusive of an evidence-based approach to environmental protections;
4. Supports efforts to streamline the approvals process for mining projects in Ontario when it does not come at the expense of safeguarding against environmental and community impacts, nor negate or remove the duty to consult with our Indigenous stakeholders such as the Mississauga’s of Scugog Island First nation (MSIFN), and those Indigenous Nations adjacent to the designated “Ring of Fire” mining zone;
5. Is supportive of mechanisms that would result in increased local procurement in the electricity sector; however, we wish it to be noted that limiting competition could increase costs if local or preferred suppliers are more expensive than international alternatives, which may result in increased electricity prices for ratepayers; and,
6. Directs that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Energy and Mines; the Honourable Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; the Honourable Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; the Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Honourable George Pirie, Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth; the Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation and Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships; Chief Kelly LaRocca of the Mississauga’s of Scugog Island First Nations; all treaty members of the William Treaties signatories; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; the Region of

Durham; and all municipalities in Ontario.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at 905.420.4660, extension 2019.

Yours truly



Susan Cassel  
City Clerk

SC:am

Copy:

- The Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Energy and Mines
- The Hon. Todd McCarthy, Minister of Environment, Conservation, and Parks
- The Hon. Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
- The Hon. Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- The Hon. George Pirie, Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth
- The Hon. Greg Rickford, Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation and Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire economic and Community Partnerships
- Chief Kelly LaRocca, Mississauga's of Scugog Island First Nations
- Chief Joanne P. Sandy, Beausoleil First Nation
- Chief Ted Williams, Rama First Nation
- Chief Donna Big Canoe, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation
- Chief Keith Knott, Curve Lake First Nation
- Chief Laurie Carr, Hiawatha First Nation
- Chief Taynar Simpson, Alderville First Nation
- Alexander Harras, Director of Legislative Services and Regional Clerk
- The Regional Municipality of Durham
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
- All Ontario Municipalities

Chief Administrative Officer