



November 28, 2017

*Sent via e-mail*

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A1  
E-mail: premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Wynne,

**Re: Review of the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993***

We write to express our serious concern with respect to the integrity and quality of the ongoing review of Ontario's *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993* ("EBR"). The EBR is one of Ontario's most important environmental laws. When it was enacted in 1993, with the support of all three parties, it positioned Ontario as a leader in respect to environmental protection, transparency, and public participation in environmentally significant decision-making. Nearly 25 years later, the EBR is showing its age and is in dire need of reform.

Our organizations supported the consultations your government launched last fall on the long-overdue review of the EBR. The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change committed to reviewing the EBR in 2010, in response to requests submitted by the Canadian Environmental Law Association and Ecojustice. In good faith, we actively participated in the process and

encouraged our supporters across the province to submit comments. The vast majority of public comments call for meaningful amendments to update the EBR, building on lessons learned over the past decades. In particular, more than 19,000 people requested that the EBR be amended to recognize that all Ontario residents have a basic human right to a healthy environment. It has now been a full year since the public consultation concluded, and the MOECC has yet to publish any response.

Based on discussions with Ministry staff, we understand the Ministry may focus its recommendations almost exclusively on policy reform rather than amendments to the Act itself. Such a response would conflict with the mandate of the review, which was to review the EBR and the regulations under it, not just practices and policies. Such a response would also conflict with the vast majority of public comments, and recommendations for reform that have been made by two successive Environmental Commissioners of Ontario and the Ontario Environmental Review Tribunal. A response focused on policy reform rather than statutory amendments would bring into question the legitimacy of the consultation process that the public and civil society groups waited more than six years to participate in.

As set out in greater detail in the comments submitted by our respective organizations during the consultation process, as well as the enclosed list of key priorities for legislative and regulation changes, some of the most pressing amendments needed to the EBR include:

- legal recognition of the human right to a healthy environment,
- improved access to environmental information,
- removing barriers to the meaningful exercise of appeal rights under section 38 of the EBR, and
- updating the Act's purposes and principles to reflect modern environmental law and human rights principles such as the precautionary principle and the principle of environmental justice.

We call on you to ensure the EBR review process concludes with integrity by charting a course towards comprehensive reform of the Act – in line with the recommendations of civil society groups and other stakeholders, two Environmental Commissioners of Ontario, and the Environmental Review Tribunal, as well as the vast majority of public comments. A commitment to meaningful action is necessary to ensure respect for Ontarians' right to live in a healthy environment, improve the quality and legitimacy of environmental decision-making, and promote sustainable development.

Yours truly,

Kaitlyn Mitchell  
Staff Lawyer and Environmental Rights Chair  
Ecojustice

Theresa McClenaghan  
Executive Director  
Canadian Environmental Law Association

Faisal Moola  
Director General, Ontario and Northern Canada  
David Suzuki Foundation

Tim Gray  
Executive Director  
Environmental Defence

Anne Bell, Ph.D.  
Director of Conservation and Education  
Ontario Nature

Heather Marshall  
Campaigns Director  
Toronto Environmental Alliance

Brennain Lloyd  
Project Coordinator  
Northwatch

Janet McKay  
Executive Director, Founder  
LEAF

Doris Grinspun  
Chief Executive Officer  
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario

Trevor Hesselink  
Director, Policy & Research  
Wildlands League

Cheryl Chetkiewicz, Ph.D.  
Conservation Scientist  
Justina Ray, Ph.D.  
President and Senior Scientist  
WCS Canada

Amber Ellis  
Executive Director  
Earthroots

Derek Coronado  
Coordinator  
Citizens Environment Alliance

Dr. Jon Walgate  
President  
Waterloo Region Nature

Nikki (Susan) May  
President  
Saugeen Nature

Susan Munro  
Chair  
Citizens Against Melrose Quarry

Alexandra Simmons  
President  
Kingston Field Naturalists

Brett Forsyth  
President  
Nature Guelph

Ian Munro  
Chair  
Concerned Citizens Committee of Tyendinaga and Environs (CCCTE)

Sue Deadman  
Ontario Nature Representative  
Orillia Naturalists' Club

Derek Connelly  
President  
North Durham Nature

Brian Brasier  
Executive Director  
Friends of Second Marsh

Sheila Fleming  
President  
Ingersoll District Nature Club

Paul Pratt  
President  
Essex County Field Naturalists' Club

Jim Johnston  
President  
Friends of Algoma East

Steve LaForest  
President  
Pickering Naturalists

Susan Moore  
Secretary  
Lennox & Addington Stewardship Council

Marcel Bénéteau  
President  
Manitoulin Nature Club

Alex Mills  
President  
Brereton Field Naturalists' Club

Paul Harpley  
President  
South Lake Simcoe Naturalists

Susan Moore  
President  
Friends of the Salmon River

Joyce Sankey  
Conservation Director  
Niagara Falls Nature Club

Jeanne Bénéteau  
President  
York-Simcoe Naturalists

Norman Wingrove  
President  
Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation

David Stringer, Ph.D.  
President  
Vankleek Hill and District Nature Society

Kate McLaren  
President  
Owen Sound Field Naturalists

Brian Bissell  
President  
Midland Penetanguishene Field Naturalists

Lois Gillette  
President  
Durham Region Field Naturalists

Bernie VanDenBelt  
President  
Nature London

Brian Maxwell  
President  
Willow Beach Field Naturalists

David Legge  
Ontario Nature Representative  
Thunder Bay Field Naturalists

George Thomson  
President  
Quinte Field Naturalists

Bronwen Tregunno  
President  
Hamilton Naturalists' Club

Bob Johnstone  
President  
St. Thomas Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Ron Corkum  
Board Member  
South Peel Naturalists' Club

Miriam Mutton  
President  
Northumberland Land Trust

Beatrice Olivastri  
Chief Executive Officer  
Friends of the Earth Canada

Lynda Lukasik  
Executive Director  
Environment Hamilton

CC: Dianne Saxe, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario  
Chris Ballard, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change  
Patrick Brown, Leader of the Official Opposition  
Andrea Horwath, Leader of the NDP