



May 14, 2026

Provincial Land Use Policy Branch  
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Dear Provincial Land Use Policy Branch:

**Re: Environmental Registry of Ontario #026-0313**

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The Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) submits the following comments on ERO Posting #026-0313, “*Streamlining the information and material that planning authorities can require as part of a complete application*”. CELA is opposed to the proposal because it unjustifiably restricts the evidentiary basis for land use planning decisions.

CELA is a specialty legal aid clinic that protects public health and the environment by using legal tools, public education, and advocacy to address environmental harms and improve policies. Since 1970, we have been focused on assisting low-income and vulnerable communities with accessing environmental justice or advocating for law reform.

CELA has previously provided comments on proposed changes to Ontario’s land use planning process. CELA recently commented on ERO Posting #025-0462, which similarly proposed changes which would undermine what information could be required as part of a complete application (in accordance with Bill 17, the *Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025*).

With respect to ERO Posting #026-0313, CELA opposes the proposal for the following reasons:

- 1- The proposed “one-size fits all” approach is lowering evidentiary requirements for all land use planning decisions and will create informational vacuums; and
- 2- Land use planning decisions must remain context-specific, well-informed, and protective of the environment and public health.

In our view, the proposal inappropriately limits the information which can be required as part of a complete application and should not be adopted.

### **(1) Preventing evidence-based decision-making**

The proposed “standardization” of information that municipal decision-makers can require as part of a complete application is lowering the evidentiary standards for planning applications.

Municipal decision-makers are best placed to identify and understand what information they require to make informed decisions. Preventing decision-makers from requiring certain information, even if they identify a need, will result in poorer decisions.

No justification has been provided for preventing municipalities from identifying and requiring the information they deem necessary to make land use planning decisions.

“Standardization” also undermines context-specific decision-making. CELA notes that different planning considerations may arise depending on the nature and location of the planning application. While a high-rise project within an urban municipality may require some information from wind or shadow impact studies to ensure safety and livability, for example, the same information may be unnecessary in rural contexts. Municipal decision-makers know their own contexts and should be free to require adequate information in a development application to inform their decisions.

**(2) Classifying certain studies as contingent undermines important planning considerations**

The proposal intends to classify studies that can form part of a complete application as core or contingent. CELA has concerns about this approach. Many of the studies proposed to be classified as “contingent” are important to assess the health and safety implications of a land use planning proposal:

- Air quality and odour
- Human-made hazards’ impacts
- Land use compatibility
- Natural hazards’ impacts
- Noise and vibration

Classifying these types of studies as contingent will not support good planning decisions.

**Conclusion**

Planning decisions often involve consideration of potential environmental or health effects on nearby communities. In CELA’s experience, evidence-based debate is critical to reach compromises and avoid conflict. The proposed approach undermines evidence-based decision-making and restricts what local land use planning officials can require in a complete application. It should not be adopted.

Sincerely,

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