

Dear Regional Representatives,

The Provincial Government has just announced the introduction of Bill 23. This Bill continues the Progressive Conservative Government's disregard for democracy and the environment.

This bill will:

- remove planning powers from Regional Governments
- remove the powers of Conservation Authorities to grant or withhold permits for development in regulated area
- require heritage designations to be reviewed and possibly revoked
- deny citizens of any right of appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal
- provide only one opportunity for public input throughout the Province, which has the second largest land mass in the country and the the greatest percentage of its population
- will receive minimal parliamentary time for review, amendment and decision

Apart from its destructive impact upon coherent planning, Bill 23 seeks to remove democratic opposition or delay to the promotion of its policies, and, in the process, to reward its favourite sector of society- land developers.

Altogether Bill 23 it is a highly undesirable piece of legislation both in its authoritarian and anti-democratic character and its anti-environmental impact upon land use at a time of the global environmental crisis.

If you share these views about Bill 23's destructive impact upon democracy and the environment, I urge you to find the will to organize a public event in which supportive Mayors and Regional Councilors, environmental groups and the general public have the bill explained, questioned and commented upon. It is important that this characteristic way of governing by the Progressive Conservative Government be made public, critiqued and to be shown to be a political development about which the public is highly concerned and does not approve of.

Granted the time to organize a public event is short, but where an issue is important and the will to respond is strong, challenges can be overcome, and beneficial results achieved. In that spirit I appeal to you to show leadership and act and act fast.

Sincerely,
Mervyn Russell