

On Thursday November 21, 2019 Margo Does and a colleague made a presentation on behalf of Nature London to the Standing Committee hearing for proposed amendments and changes to Bill 132, because there are many areas of concern regarding the effects of these changes on the environment that need to be addressed. The following are excerpts from Margo's address to the Standing Committee.

*On page 12 of this government's 'Made in Ontario Environmental Plan' it states, "We will take strong enforcement action to protect our lakes, waterways and groundwater from pollution". If the proposed regulations are implemented, I fail to see how this government will live up to its promises.*

*As an example of one area, the Pesticide Act, the proposed changes would begin to open the door to undo the hard-fought battle of the cosmetic use ban of 2009. If these changes are implemented they will put people (especially children) and the whole ecosystem unnecessarily at risk for potential health issues and damage.*

Margo touched on three other areas in Schedules 9 and 16. They are:

*Schedule 9, 'Polluter Penalties', where one of the most concerning changes would likely be the way Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMP's) are appealed; and also that the proposed penalties will not match the impact of harm.*

*In the 'Aggregate Resources Act', Schedule 16, the new proposals would restrict municipal autonomy, preventing them from addressing the impact of pits and quarries on groundwater by outlawing the use of municipal zoning laws to prevent aggregate operations from digging beneath the water table.*

*In Schedule 16 'Crown Forest Sustainability Act' the proposed changes could mean that new permits would not be required to promote forest sustainability. Another concern would be that the Minister would no longer require approval for changes to a work plan. Additionally, several forestry reports would no longer need to be tabled in the Legislature or approved by Cabinet.*

Margo's closing remarks were:

*I think this government needs to listen to independent scientists. What can be more important than the Earth we are living on? We are in a climate crisis and even this government agrees, so why slacken environmental regulations? I don't see any love in these proposals, nor kindness, and it hurts me to read these things. As civil servants you are responsible for our health and safety. We pay your salaries, so please live up to the responsibilities and promises, as I stated earlier, to protect the environment in your 'Made In Ontario Environmental Plan'. Please don't lie to us. We are intelligent and aware people. We don't deserve that.*

*As well, a ten-minute slot for speaking does not make me feel like we live in a democracy.*

[Margo and her colleague from Nature London were allowed a total of ten minutes to make their presentations.]

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Ontario activists: Margo also wants to draw your attention to other areas of environmental concern:

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act  
Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act  
Mining Act  
Nutrient Management Act  
Ontario Water Resources Act  
Public Lands Act  
Safe Drinking Water Act  
... among others