



Ontario's Endangered Species Act (ESA) is at risk! The Ford Government is proposing harmful changes that will make vulnerable species in Ontario even more vulnerable. This is an SOS - make your voice heard!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE PROPOSED CHANGES*:

- 1. 'Pay to Slay'** - Ministry of Environment, Conservation & Parks (MECP) wants to allow developers & other proponents of harmful activities to pay into a fund rather than fulfilling requirements for on-the-ground compensation. This reduces accountability, making it far easier to proceed with activities that harm species at risk & their habitats.
- 2. Rejecting science** - The Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO) is comprised of qualified scientists who perform science-based assessments of whether a species is at risk. MECP is proposing to broaden COSSARO membership so that it includes those with "community knowledge" – a vague term that could open up COSSARO to those who do not have adequate expertise in species assessment or have a different agenda altogether.
- 3. Deserting "edge of range" species** - COSSARO would be required to base its assessments not on the status of a species in Ontario, but instead on its status throughout its range. For example, southern Ontario endangered species at the northern limit of their range may receive less or no protection, depending on their status outside Ontario. This is especially concerning in the face of climate change because healthy species populations are needed at their northern limits to help species adapt to changing climatic conditions.
- 4. Limiting protections** - The Minister would be able to limit Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections so that they apply only in specific geographies or under specific circumstances. This could exclude important habitats and species from protection
- 5. Ministerial veto of automatic protections** - The listing of species at risk would be "de-coupled" from automatic protections for threatened & endangered species & their habitats and the Minister would have greater "discretion on protections." They could suspend species & habitat protections for up to three years based on social or economic considerations. The proposal is to exempt such delays from Environmental Bill of Rights posting & consultation requirements, leaving the public with no notice & no input on such decisions. Meanwhile, those with political connections could undermine species protections without full public scrutiny.
- 6. Sweeping authorizations for harmful activities** - MECP proposes to create "landscape agreements" for proponents undertaking harmful activities in multiple locations. Such an approach does not lend itself to addressing site-specific or species-specific concerns and consequently presents unwarranted additional risk for species already in peril.

7. Dodging ESA requirements - MECP wants to allow activities approved under other laws without any additional authorizations under the ESA, even if they harm threatened or endangered species or their habitats. This could result in permanent exemptions from the ESA for industries like the forestry sector.

8. Interfering with the listing of species at risk - The Minister would be able to require COSSARO to reconsider its science-based listing decisions. This change would make it possible for developers and others who have the ear of government to derail the listing process if they do not like a COSSARO decision.

9. Goodbye expert input - Currently, the ESA requires the Minister to consult with an independent expert prior to creating regulations that would jeopardize the survival of a species, or issuing permits for harmful activities that would provide a significant social or economic benefit to Ontario. The proposal is to remove this requirement.

10. Delays, delays, delays - Multiple delays are proposed for the listing, planning and reporting on species at risk, undermining species recovery. The proposal to list species nine months after COSSARO makes its assessments public – during this time vulnerable plants, animals and their habitats could be eliminated before protections kick in.

**This list prepared by Ontario Nature: <https://ontarionature.org/endangered-species-act-review-top-ten/>*

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP FIGHT THE PROPOSED CHANGES

Environment Hamilton & Hamilton Naturalists' Club urge you to voice your opposition to the Ford government's proposed changes to the ESA. You will find details below about what you need to do to prepare and submit your comments to the Environmental Registry of Ontario. **Ontarians have until May 18th to make our voices heard!**

Step-by-Step Instructions For Preparing Environmental Registry Comments:

- To access the Environmental Registry of Ontario visit <http://ero.ontario.ca>
- Register an account in your name (top right-hand corner).
- You will be commenting on the **'10th Year Review of Ontario's Endangered Species Act'** which you can access via this link: <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-5033>
- Be sure to make reference to the priority concerns about these changes set out in this factsheet and add your own personal concerns too!
- Note that the deadline to comment is **midnight on May 18th, 2019.**

Other Actions You Can Take

- Connect with your MPP and voice your concern. Visit www.ola.org/en/members/current for contact info.
- Connect with your City Councillor - voice your concern - www.hamilton.ca/council-committee/mayor-council
- Visit EH & HNC's websites for updates and news:

Environment Hamilton: www.environmenthamilton.org

Hamilton Naturalists' Club: www.hamiltonnature.org

