



**Bill 5: Protect Ontario by Unleashing our
Economy Act and Bill 17: Protect Ontario by
Building Faster and Smarter Act**

Committee of the Whole
May 22, 2025

Bill 5: Summary

- ▶ Bill 5: Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act was introduced on April 17, 2025.
- ▶ Comments on Bill 5 were due by May 17, 2025.
- ▶ Bill 5 would create a new Special Economic Zones Act.
- ▶ Bill 5 proposes to amend several Acts including:
 - Ontario Heritage Act,
 - Ontario Energy Board Act,
 - Environmental Assessment Act,
 - Mining Act,
 - Environmental Protection Act,
 - Electricity Act,
 - Endangered Species Act, (to be replaced by the Species Conservation Act), and
 - Rebuilding Ontario Place Act.

Bill 5: Special Economic Zones

- ▶ Bill 5 would allow the province to designate ‘special economic zones’ (SEZs) including geographic areas where ‘trusted proponents’ or ‘designated projects’ would be exempt from provincial legislation and regulations, and from municipal by-laws.
- ▶ The implementing regulations would provide criteria for the creation and location of SEZs, as well as identifying the project or class of projects within SEZs.
- ▶ ‘Trusted proponents’ and ‘designated projects’ are not defined terms in the legislation, but that would come through future regulations.
- ▶ Regulations are to be developed by September 2025.
- ▶ It is not clear how municipalities may be consulted on the establishment of SEZs or approvals within SEZs in their municipal boundaries.
- ▶ The relationships between SEZs and MZO is also not clear.

Bill 5: Endangered Species

- ▶ Bill 5 would repeal the Endangered Species Act and replace it with the Species Conservation Act.
- ▶ Reduce the definition of 'habitat' such that it may not include all aspects of a species life cycle or ability to meet its needs for survival.
- ▶ Allow the Minister to determine if a species will be listed under the Act and give the government the ability to remove protected species.
- ▶ Change the framework for obtaining authorizations to a predominately self registration-based framework, provided projects meet minimum requirements, to be established through future regulations.
- ▶ Remove the term 'harass' from the provisions prohibiting harm to listed species.
- ▶ Remove migratory birds and aquatic species protected under the federal *Species at Risk Act* from having protection under the Provincial Act.
- ▶ Recognize Indigenous traditional knowledge as part of the criteria identifying and evaluating species.

Bill 5: Ontario Heritage Act

- ▶ Bill 5 would amend the Ontario Heritage Act as follows:
 - Establish new powers for the Province to waive requirements/establish exemptions for any requirements in Part 6 of the Act and its regulations, including the need to conduct an archaeological assessment.
 - Criteria to be met for a property to be eligible for an exemption would be established via a future regulation.
 - Provide the minister with the ability to direct that a property be inspected to assess whether any artifacts or archaeological sites are on the land or under water.
 - Provide the minister with the ability to direct where artifacts and archaeological collections are to be deposited with public institutions or Indigenous communities.

Recommendation on Bill 5

1. That the information regarding Bill 5 from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario be received for information.

Bill 17: Summary

- ▶ Bill 17: Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act was introduced on May 12, 2025.
- ▶ Comments on Bill 17 are due by June 11, 2025. Some of the associated regulation consultations have a slightly different deadline.
- ▶ Bill 17 proposes to amend a number of Acts including:
 - City of Toronto Act,
 - Building Transit Faster Act,
 - Building Code Act,
 - Development Charges Act,
 - Transit-Oriented Communities Act,
 - Ministry of Infrastructure Act,
 - Metrolinx Act, and
 - Planning Act.

Bill 17: Development Charges Act

- ▶ Bill 17 would amend the Development Charges Act as follows:
 - Long-term care homes are no longer subject to development charges,
 - Development charges can be deferred until occupancy for owned housing or paid at the time of building permit,
 - Create regulation-making authority to define a 'local service',
 - Create regulation-making authority to merge service categories for the purposes of receiving DC credits (i.e., developers could received a broader range of DC credits),
 - Allow for municipalities to update their DC by-laws in a simplified manner for certain updates, and
 - Make changes to the 'freeze-period' to ensure developer pays the lower of the DC rate i.e., either the frozen rate or the current rate whichever is lower.

Bill 17: Planning Act

- ▶ Bill 17 and associated regulation changes would:
 - Provide authority to limit municipal complete application studies, removing wind, sun/shadow, urban design, and lighting studies.
 - Provide greater recognition of reports prepared by prescribed certified professionals. This would specify certified professionals from whom municipalities would be required to accept studies.
 - Remove the need for certain minor variances within 10% of existing requirements.
 - Give the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the authority to impose conditions on a use permitted by a Minister's zoning order, and
 - Streamline planning approvals for publicly funded kindergarten to grade 12 schools to exempt portables from site plan control requirements.

Bill 17: Planning Act continued

- Consult on opportunities to streamline official plans to include simplified and standardized official plan designations.
- Consider changing the need to use the Ministry of Finance (MOF) population projections to 'use the higher of the MOF numbers or current municipal projections.'
- Consult on making Minister's decisions exempt from provincial policy on a case-by-case basis. A framework would be developed on how this could be done.

Bill 17: Other

- ▶ Bill 17 would include other changes, some of which are as follows:
 - Explore the standardization of municipal data tracking in the land use planning, building code, and permit application including using technology to improve processes.
 - Consider Building and Fire Code changes to allow for more flexibility for 4-storey townhouse units.
 - Consult on streamlining the development of communal water/sewage systems and permissions for distributed, modular 'off-grid' water treatment facilities.
 - Exploring a public utility model for water and wastewater infrastructure including changes to the existing municipal services corporation-model which could include governance and financial.
 - Review and streamline Ministry of Transportation processes.
 - Consult on a standardized road construction standard across Ontario's 444 municipalities.

Recommendation on Bill 17

1. That the correspondence regarding Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smart Act, 2025 be received; and
2. That staff provide comments on the proposed legislation prior to the June 11th, 2025 deadline.