



Citizens Environment Alliance



WILDLANDS LEAGUE
A chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society



David
Suzuki
Foundation



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Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers
autorisés de l'Ontario

Speaking out for nursing. Speaking out for health.

November 29, 2013

The Honourable John Gerretsen
Ministry of the Attorney General
McMurtry-Scott Building
720 Bay Street, 11th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2S9

Via Email

Dear Attorney General:

Re: Bill 83, Protection of Public Participation Act, 2013

We are writing to you about the status of Bill 83, *Protection of Public Participation Act, 2013* which you introduced in the Ontario Legislature on June 4, 2013. The Bill has been in second reading debates since September 25, 2013. We request that you take all the necessary steps to ensure the Bill passes second reading and is referred to Committee before the Legislature rises for the holiday break on December 13th.

Bill 83 reflects in very large part the recommendations of the Anti-SLAPP Advisory Panel which was established three years ago to provide advice on the content of legislation to target strategic law suits against public participation (SLAPPs). The Panel, which was chaired by Dean Mayo Moran of the Faculty of Law of the University of Toronto and made up of two leading legal experts on defamation law, concluded that there was a need for anti-SLAPP legislation in Ontario. In its report, the Panel stated that “it was persuaded that threats of lawsuits for speaking

out on matters of public interest, combined with a number of actual lawsuits, deter significant numbers of people from participating in discussion on such matters.”

Bill 83 provides an effective response to the problem of SLAPPs in Ontario and would prevent the misuse of our courts from SLAPP suits without depriving anyone of appropriate remedies for expression that causes significant harm. We also note the Bill has received support from members of both opposition parties.

The enactment of anti-SLAPP legislation in Ontario has received wide endorsement from organizations and members of the public, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, public interest organizations, academics, the Ontario Bar Association as well as former members of the judiciary.

We regard the adoption of Bill 83 as vital to Ontario’s democracy as it will protect the public from meritless lawsuits intended to deter them from engaging in discussion on matters of public interest. Accordingly, we strongly urge the Ontario government to ensure the expeditious enactment of this important Bill.

Yours truly,



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Joanna Kerr
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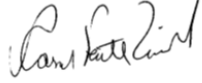
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- c. The Honourable John Milloy, Government House Leader
Julia Munro, PC Critic, Attorney General
Jagmeet Singh, NDP Critic, Attorney General