

May 3, 2013

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building  
Queens Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Wynne,

We, as members of the Ontario Nature Youth Council, are writing to you to urge you to stop proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act.

Many dollars-and-cents arguments can be made in favour of maintaining robust protection for endangered species. Intact ecosystems provide us with services valued in the millions of dollars, such as water and air filtration, erosion mitigation and storm water management. Ontario's stunning natural landscapes provide many opportunities for tourism, and recreation, both of which boost the economy and improve Ontarians' quality of life. As species become endangered, our ecosystem as a whole slowly becomes more fragile –biological processes are extremely co-dependant, so if a species becomes extirpated or worse, goes extinct, the effects are unpredictable and could be profound.

As youth, however, economic arguments are less poignant to us than the fact that *nature is magic*. To roll over a rotten log in a park and spot a rare salamander, to discover a barn owl nesting on your family farm, to find frog eggs in a puddle in your backyard... is magic. Protecting endangered species is a matter of preserving a world where a sense of wonder still exists for us. Our society is excellent at building illusions around us based on wealth: what we can look like, what we should do, what our relationships should be like. But when we compare such illusions with the magical world around us, they fall away, allowing us to be more free, creative and productive individuals. Indeed, getting out into a beautiful preserved ecosystem and learning to love what we find there may be the only way to truly free ourselves from the shallow desires which we are constantly told we must embody.

We are very concerned that the government may be altering the Endangered Species Act. Real robust protection of the wild spaces which we depend on both emotionally and financially by the provincial leadership is essential, especially when Ottawa is not really stepping up to help. Please do not allow the habitat of these magical but endangered creatures to be destroyed, because it will be our greatest inheritance. We do not yet know all that we can gain from them, nor what the cost of losing them would be, but we are sure that nothing built at their expense could equal their value, if perhaps not their price.

Please consider our views when you are making this decision which affects all of us.

Thank you for your attention. We look forward to your response, and would be happy to discuss this further. On behalf of the undersigned, please contact:

Bridget Allen-O'Neil  
BAllen-O'Neil@utschools.ca  
416-694-9930

Laura Freel  
Freel.Laura@gmail.com  
416-484-0777

Yours truly,



Abby S.  
Ancaster



Calvin D.  
West Lorne



Jackie H.  
Toronto



Alex C.  
Toronto



Carolyn H.  
Ottawa



Jake B.  
Tamworth



Ayesha T.  
Toronto



Drew S.  
Kingston



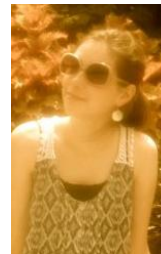
Jayden R.  
Whitby



Bridget A-O.  
Toronto



Ebi G.  
Brampton



Josée C.  
Sudbury



Joyce C.  
Toronto



Melissa C.  
Newmarket



Mudassir Q.  
Mississauga



Julian G.  
Kitchener



Skye M.  
Minesing



Michael M.  
Bracebridge



Stephanie G.  
Pickering



Kailynn W.  
Thunder Bay



Moe Q.  
Mississauga



Steven K.  
New Lowell



Laura F.  
Toronto

### Members of the Ontario Nature Youth Council

*The Ontario Nature Youth Council is made up of 44 teenagers from communities across Ontario. Our mission is to build a diverse provincial network of youth dedicated to inspiring, connecting and educating our communities while protecting wild species and wild spaces.*