



**THE ANNEX  
RESIDENTS'  
ASSOCIATION**

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To: Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy  
Re: Ontario Bill 23 - More Homes Built Faster, 2022

We are writing to voice our opposition to Bill 23. While we fully agree with that Ontario needs more housing, there has not been adequate consultation nor has an objective, critical analysis been done to assess our specific housing needs. As it stands, this Bill fails to address affordability or the liveability of our communities, short-sightedly undercuts our ability to mitigate and prepare for environmental disasters, and undermines and weakens the democratic process.

This Bill shamefully pushes aside the rights of renters, particularly those dwelling in affordable units, by removing financial and housing protections they currently enjoy if displaced by new developments. Where are these people to go? What rights will almost 50% of the people in Toronto who are renters have if they are so readily displaced by developers wishing to reap higher profit margins? We are alarmed by this overt inequality and can see it will lead only to less affordable housing, not more.

Not only renters but all city residents will be financially encumbered by other provisions in this Bill. By slashing development fees and diminishing existing provisions regarding park planning, the government is effectively granting developers immediate higher profit margins. This comes at the expense of the communities who must now pay for the infrastructure, services, and public amenities necessary for a liveable city. This Bill effectively transfers the costs of development to homeowners and tenants through higher taxes and rent increases. We are therefore left with the unsavoury perception that those benefitting most from this Bill are the people who need housing the least.

We are equally troubled by the proposed removal of the Green Building Standards and the streamlining of the Conservation Authorities. This, taken together with the Ford government's broken promise not to touch the Greenbelt, is truly backwards thinking. In the face of climate change, we believe that these standards should actually be more robust and that more protections and subsidies should be granted to encourage the building of sustainable communities. For example, the government should be taking the lead and offering financial incentives for office towers to be re-purposed or for homeowners to retrofit part of their homes for renters and/or to make them more energy efficient and resilient.

Our democratic process is weakened by Bill 23 since it limits who may participate in the planning process and who may appeal development proposals. The Ford government proposes to diminish the roles of municipal planning and heritage conservation to the point of impotency, preparing to blithely override policy and analysis developed through extensive community consultation. Up to this point Annex residents have been able to achieve modifications to development applications to create buildings more sympathetic to the fabric of our community. The results may not be perfect or to everyone's satisfaction, but that's part of the democratic process. However, the provisions in Bill 23 will significantly limit our ability to help shape our community for the good of all.

The Ford government was elected by less than 18% of eligible voters. That low voter turnout reflects the sad reality that citizens feel they can't trust politicians. Consider: Why bother voting when a Premier can soothe voters by promising not to touch the Greenbelt and then only months after achieving power renege on that promise?

A responsible government would keep its promises. Failing that, a responsible government would give various stakeholders across the political spectrum ample opportunity to respond to major policy changes. Instead, this government has ignored warnings from its own public servants. And in a more Draconian move, it has brought this Omnibus Bill forward at a time when newly elected municipal councils are not yet officially installed. In these circumstances, the government should be raising the democratic bar – not lowering it.

We believe this Bill to be woefully short-sighted. In the final analysis it benefits those who need housing the least. It encourages rather than mitigates environmental disasters. And it undermines and weakens the democratic process.

Ontario citizens deserve a more democratic and equitable response to the housing crisis. We implore you to reconsider Bill 23.

Sincerely,

Rita Bilerman  
Chair, Annex Residents' Association