



August 14, 2017

VIA E-MAIL: OMBReview@ontario.ca

Hon. Bill Mauro, Minister of Municipal Affairs
Hon Yasir Naqvi, Attorney General

Provincial Planning Policy Branch
Ministry of Municipal Affairs
777 Bay Street, 13th floor
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2E5

RE: **Bill 139 (Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017)**

Dear Ministers:

At a recent meeting of our executive board we unanimously endorsed the then draft submission of the brief from the Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations (FONTRA) dated August 4, 2017.


Our organization was founded 17 years ago, in part, over the frustration felt by community and neighbourhood associations from across Ontario over the use of the OMB tribunals by the development industry to overturn local official plans and even provincial policies. This was accomplished by developers taking advantage of procedural changes over the years at the OMB: changes which favoured "expert" evidence that less well-funded respondents (and even some local authorities) lacked the money and resources to challenge; challenges to official plans where some commissioners gave the developer backed appellants carte blanche to rewrite parts of an OP without any community consultation or input from local councils; and the lack of consistency in OMB decisions due to the Board's overall disregard of precedent and therefore the lack of any context or judicial restraint in some of the Board's decisions.

While the FONTRA submission does not agree with all of the proposed changes in the Bill and suggests various changes, the Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods believes that the proposed Local Planning Appeal Tribunal will, in the words of the FONTRA writers, "... [introduce] hearing procedures that will put residents and property owners on more of an equal footing with developers in making their concerns heard."

Our organization remains hopeful that this vision of "equal footing" among everyone involved in planning controversies in this province will remain intact following your considerations of submissions like this one from neighbourhood groups from across Ontario.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely yours,


Archie Campbell
President

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OF ONTARIO**

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