

Transformation of the MNR in the Ontario Budget

The Liberal Party of Ontario does not deserve any further opportunity to govern this once great province. This new budget is economically bad enough but if you look closely you will find the following clauses that will surely lead to the further degradation if not complete annihilation of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the further degradation of Ontario's natural resources.

Under the title of "**Ministry of Natural Resources Transformation**" the Liberal's have stated that, "to enable the Ministry of Natural Resources to transform the stewardship and conservation of Ontario's natural resources in the most fiscally responsible way, the ministry is proposing to: 1. transform key parts of its legislation, regulations, policies and guidelines with a view to streamlining and automating permitting processes and requirements; 2. conduct resource management with a stronger regional focus and fewer field offices; and 3. redesign its science and delivery activities to shift away from a species-by-species approach to a risk-based ecosystem/regional approach. "

Sneaking these clauses into the budget bill (A strategy the Liberals have used before) Allows the Liberals to limit debate or committee scrutiny. They didn't have to spend any time actually considering or planning the changes that will be made. They did not have to bother themselves with any gathering of public input as to what changes might be made to do the best for Ontario's natural resources. They do not have to listen to constructive ideas about proposed changes in the Legislature because attention and debate will be on the specific budget money items. The wording is ambiguous enough that if the budget is passed it will legitimize the Liberals to make any ill-conceived sweeping changes to existing legislation and the Ministry that they can conjure up.

The Liberals have demonstrated in their 8-year mandate no understanding of the value of our natural resources. They have ignored the Environmental Commissioners latest report on "Biodiversity a nations Commitment an Obligation for Ontario." They have failed to renew Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy which expired in 2010 and they have ignored a renewed Biodiversity strategy created by the Ontario Biodiversity Council a third party collection of stakeholders. They have already gutted the MNR so that it is only a ghost of its former self providing less money now than what the funding was in 1993.

By adding this legislation to what is supposed to be a money bill the Liberals are giving themselves cart blanche to further mutilate the natural resources of this province and the MNR that should be preserving, protecting, restoring and improving them. Ontario's natural resources and the MNR are too valuable to be treated in this off handed manner. If you value our natural resources it is time to demand that your MPP vote against this budget and this Liberal government.