

Delegation to Wilmot Council in support of Motion 16.1 (Opposing Bill 5)
Monday, June 23, 2025

Mayor Salonen, Wilmot Councillors and staff, members of the public. My name is Julie Jutzi and I am a resident of Wilmot Township. I am delegating on behalf of the Nith Valley EcoBoosters, a local organization that is committed to achieving and supporting a long-term healthy environment in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships through education, action and collaboration. Our group wishes to offer our support for Councillor Martin's motion opposing Bill 5: Protecting Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025.

Thank you, Councillor Martin, for introducing this motion.

While the Nith Valley EcoBoosters organization agrees with the content of the motion, there are aspects of it that we feel are especially important and which I would like to highlight. As stated by Environmental Defence, "the ability to create Special Economic Zones as outlined in Schedule 9 of Bill 5 would allow the premier and cabinet to take full control over decisions that are usually made by the legislature." "Trusted proponents" will be given authority to undertake projects regardless of where they are located and without adhering to provincial or municipal laws, such as the Planning Act and Environmental Protection Act. This will result in an erosion of our democratic processes as rules are applied differently to different people. It is also a threat to how our municipalities function and to our environment.

We have an Official Plan in Waterloo Region that was developed by local staff and citizens with intimate knowledge of this area and was approved by the local municipal governments in 2022. It allows for increased population and space for industrial and commercial opportunities while protecting the thriving agricultural economy and our water sources. The Wilmot Land Assembly project gives a very good example of how ignoring good planning and potential impacts on local livelihoods, natural areas, water sources and future food security can disrupt a community and cause anxiety about the long-term health and well-being of the area.

We are aware that Wilmot along with other municipalities in the Region have requested adjustments to that Official Plan to allow for more land for

development. Wilmot has to retain autonomy for local decision making so that changes to development plans take into consideration local needs and the municipality's capacity to meet those needs. Schedule 9 of Bill 5 poses a significant threat to that autonomy and losing it could have financial and environmental impacts for the municipality and its residents.

Over the last month, a number of Ontario municipalities have passed motions opposing Bill 5, including Guelph, just last week, plus Orangeville, Caledon, Kingston, Toronto, Chatham-Kent, and North Grenville. The Nith Valley EcoBoosters organization urges Wilmot Council to join with these communities and others to notify our provincial government about your opposition to Bill 5 by approving Councillor Martin's motion.