Dear Premier Ford,

I am a member of the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa. I would like to voice my concerns with respect to Bill 23, the proposed ‘More Homes Built Faster Act’.

I readily acknowledge there is an affordable housing crisis in Ottawa and in Ontario. In reviewing this bill, I am not convinced it actually leads to more affordable housing and I think it may wreak environmental havoc. Furthermore, I am concerned by the diminishment of the consultative process that we know builds good democratic decisions. I am concerned with some undemocratic elements in this piece of legislation, and some unacceptable attacks on the environment, related biodiversity and food security.

These values are important to me. The Fifth Principle of Unitarian Universalism is “the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large”; our Seventh Principle concerns “the respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”.

The proposed legislation was presented during an election period with limited opportunity for newly elected councils or the public to intercede. I am very concerned that the Bill takes away the ability of municipalities to make local decisions on land use planning. This critically affects Ottawa’s High Performance Development Standard, our green building standard introduced earlier this year to help ensure we meet our climate change targets in terms of energy and carbon efficiency for new builds. This is short sighted and will ultimately cost homeowners and renters more. In addition, Ottawa is facing increasing heat and more intense storms. Buildings must be better designed to handle these crises to prevent escalating threats to human safety and ever rising insurance costs.

Bill 23 also raises a number of environmental concerns. The province’s current approach on Conservation Authorities deprives Ontario of its ecosystem and habitat protection, presaging risks of flooding, uncontained sprawl and lack of protection for habitats, ecosystems, and wetlands.

The Bill also raises many social concerns, with significant impacts on housing for the most vulnerable. Regulations seeking to protect tenants from renovictions will be cut; the requirement of new developments to set aside a certain proportion of affordable housing will be capped at 5%; and affordable housing will be able to return to the market after just 25 years. These changes will deepen our housing and homelessness crisis, not alleviate it.

Proposed exemptions from Development Charges levied by municipalities to pay for essential infrastructure, and from Parkland and Community Benefits Contributions, mean fewer municipal services, parks and community centres in newly developed areas. Such services will likely need to be funded by the taxpayer resulting in increased property taxes in a time of inflation. Densification of urban areas and an increase in housing are needed, and the allowance of three units per lot will help. But in realizing that goal it must be done in such a way as to prevent undue environmental, health, social and municipal fiscal damage.

I would ask for your support in adapting portions of Bill 23 to address these concerns; and that the province to use a climate lens when addressing the housing crisis in Ontario so that development is aligned with the climate change mitigation and adaptation that is required of us. I am disappointed you did not delay the passage of this Bill so there would be more time for fulsome review and consultation. I would ask you remedy this by adapting Bill 23 to address the aforementioned concerns in its implementation.

Sincerely

[Your name]

[Your address]

[Your Postal code]

**Email Addresses**

Send to: Premier Doug Ford doug.fordco@pc.ola.org

cc: Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve.Clark@pc.ola.org

c: David Piccini, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks David.Piccini@pc.ola.org

cc: Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

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cc. Mayor Mark Sutcliffe Mark.Sutcliffe@ottawa.ca

cc: Your MPP <https://www.ola.org/en/members>

cc: Your City Councillor <https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/mayor-and-city-councillors>