Dear Premier, Ministers and MPPS of Ontario:

At the same time as the United Nations is reporting nature is in more trouble than at any other time in human history, the Ontario government is considering weakening protections for species at risk.

Schedule 5 of Bill 108: The More Homes, More Choices Act, needs to be removed!

Schedule 5 of the Act is concerning for many reasons:

* It allows a newly listed species to be covered under a pre-existing permit which could wipe out areas that are key to its survival and recovery.
* It allows harm to a species through landscape agreements or conservation fund payments that don't have to benefit the species or habitat being harmed. Establishing a conservation fund can be beneficial and support important recovery and restoration projects for more common species where populations are sustainable with proper conservation efforts. However, it is not the best practice for species at risk who are facing possible extinction.
* It gives the Environment Minister the ability to suspend protection for up to three years and allows the Minister to limit protection once those three years are up. Such delays make it more difficult to recover a species and increase the costs associated with recovery.
* It slows the operations of the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO), creating administrative burdens for the listing process and calls into question its ability to act as an independent body.

These are just a few of the many issues with Schedule 5 of Bill 108.

We need you to do more for wildlife.

The Ontario Government needs to show leadership by creating incentives to protect and recover species at risk.

We urge you to work with conservation organizations and business development to ensure a balanced approach.