

SCIENTISTS URGE FEDERAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF HIGHWAY 413

Nov 11, 2024

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault

Minister of the Environment and Climate Change

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario

Canada K1A 0A6

Steven.Guilbeault@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Guilbeault,

We, the undersigned scientists, urge you to undertake a **federal impact assessment of Ontario's proposed Highway 413**.

We urge you to act because this project threatens values that are under clear federal jurisdiction.

Scientific research has shown that the construction of Highway 413 could negatively impact as many as 29 species listed under the federal *Species at Risk Act* and 122 species of birds protected under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*. Based on past research related to the construction of similar highways, fish habitat in over 100 waterways crossing the proposed Highway 413 will be adversely impacted.

Some of the federally protected species that could be harmed are listed as **endangered or threatened**. These include the Red-Headed Woodpecker (Endangered), Jefferson Salamander (Endangered), Western Chorus Frog (Threatened), the Rapids Clubtail (Endangered) and the Redside Dace (Endangered). (The Redside Dace is restricted to only a few streams and rivers in southern Ontario, the majority of which are found along the proposed Highway 413 route).

Failure to protect these species could lead to meaningful reductions in their chances of long-term survival and recovery of these species at risk in Canada.

These threats occur in the context of an Ontario government that is not taking adequate measures to ensure endangered species' survival. Ontario has watered down its *Endangered Species Act*, removing protection for species that are endangered in Ontario but also live elsewhere, an approach that scientists have condemned.

As well, Ontario has initiated a harmful practice that allows developers to destroy endangered species' habitat, provided they pay into a fund managed by the province. They have also just introduced legislation that, if passed, would exempt the 413 from the province's *Environmental Assessment Act*. The Government of Ontario's Bill 212 (*Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act, 2024*) will also allow highway construction work to immediately commence in certain areas before authorizations under

other provincial acts (e.g. *Endangered Species Act*) have been issued or Indigenous consultation has occurred.

Because of Ontario's poor track record on endangered species' preservation, there is no alternative to a strong federal enforcement role in areas of its jurisdiction.

In the absence of federal action, a proper review of the environmental impacts of the proposed highway will not occur and dozens of federally-listed species at risk could be harmed, perhaps irrevocably.

Thank you for your urgent attention in this matter.

Yours,

NAME	INSTITUTION (for identification only)
Dr. Nicholas Mandrak, Dept. of Biological Sciences	University of Toronto
Dr. Don Jackson, Dept. of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology	University of Toronto
Dr. Marie-Josée Fortin, Dept. of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology	University of Toronto
Dr. Faisal Moola, Dept of Geography, Environment and Geomatics	University of Guelph
Dr Yannick Beaudoin, Well-being Economies Alliance, Member of the Global Council	
Michael Polanyi, PhD, Policy and Campaign Manager, Nature Canada	
Prof Kevin McCann, Dept of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph	
Dr Edward Xie, Clinician Investigator, Toronto General Hospital Research Institute	
Dr. Samantha Green, family physician and Assistant Professor, University of Toronto	
John Fryxell, PhD, FRSC, Dept of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph	
Prof Trevor E. Pitcher, PhD, Dept of Integrative Biology, University of Windsor	
Prof Njal Rollinson, Dept of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Toronto	
Prof Dan Mennill, Associate Dean of Science, Grad Studies and Research, Univ of Windsor	
Prof Sheila Colla, Faculty of Environment and Urban Change, York University	
Prof Ze'ev Gedalof, Dept of Geography, Environment and Geomatics, Univ of Guelph	
Gard W. Otis, Professor Emeritus, School of Environmental Sciences, University of Guelph	
Jim Bogart, Professor Emeritus, Department of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph	
Prof Scott MacDougall-Shackleton, PhD, Dept of Psychology, Western University	
Prof Thomas Hossie, Dept of Biology, Trent University	
Prof Robert McLaughlin, Partnership for Ecosystem Research and Management Scientist (retired)	

Dr Warren Bell, Past Founding President, Cdn Association of Physicians for the Environment

Thomas Green, PhD

Peter A. Abrams, Professor Emeritus, Dept of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, Univ of Toronto

Dr. Steven Farber, Department of Human Geography, University of Toronto

Prof Steven Cooke, Director, Cdn Centre for Evidence-Informed Conservation, Carleton University

Roger Keil, Distinguished Research Professor, Faculty of Enviro & Urban Change, York University


Dr. Louise Blight, School of Environmental Studies, University of Victoria

Dr. Julia Kilgour, Dept. of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph

Glenn Tattersall, PhD, Professor, Biological Sciences, Brock University

Prof Robert Hanner, PhD, Dept of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph

Prof M. Alex Smith, PhD, Dept of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph

Prof Greg Thorn, Associate Chair, Undergraduate, Dept of Biology, Western University 

Dr. Rebecca Rooney, Associate Professor, Dept of Biology, University of Waterloo

Robert Montgomerie, Professor Emeritus, Department of Biology, Queen's University

Dr. Dalal Hanna, Assistant Professor of Conservation Science, Carleton University

Prof Joseph Bennett, Department of Biology, Carleton University

Dr Rachel Buxton, Assistant Professor, Carleton University

Prof Jeremy Kerr, Department of Biology, University of Ottawa

Bridget Stutchbury, Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Biology, York University

Sheila Macfie, PhD, Associate Professor of Biology, University of Western Ontario

Dr. Shannon McCauley, Department of Biology, University of Toronto

Dr. Rosalind Murray, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Toronto

Dr. Megan Bontrager, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Toronto

Dr. Peter Kotanen, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Toronto

Dr. Martin Krkosek, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Toronto

Dr. Scott MacIvor, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Toronto

Dr. John Stinchcombe, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Toronto

Dr. Cassidy D'Aloia, Department of Biology, University of Toronto

Dr. Shelley Arnott, Department of Biology, Queen's University

Dr. John Smol, Department of Biology, Queen's University

Dr. Ryan Danby, Department of Geography & Planning, Queen's University

Dr. Robert Bailey, Department of Biology, Ontario Tech University

Dr. Andrea Kirkwood, Department of Biology, Ontario Tech University

Dr. Stephanie Melles, Department of Chemistry & Biology, Toronto Metropolitan University

Dr. Lesley Campbell, Department of Chemistry & Biology, Toronto Metropolitan University

Dr. James Schaefer, Department of Biology, Trent University

Dr. Lenore Fahrig, Department of Biology, Carleton University

Dr. Peter Sakuls, MD

Dr. Rachael Derbyshire, Postdoctoral Fellow, Dept of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph

Prof Pamela Rutherford, Dept of Biology, Brandon Univ, COSEWIC - Amphibian and Reptile - Co-Chair

Dr. Sherri Cox, University of Guelph

Dr. Katherine Drotos, Dept of Mathematics & Statistics, University of Guelph

Dr Mary Ann Perron, Liber Ero Postdoctoral Fellow, River Institute

Dr. Brian C Husband, Professor of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph

Beren Robinson, Professor Ret'd., Dept. of Integrative Biology, Univ. of Guelph

Prof Brent J. Sinclair, Ph.D, Department of Biology, Western University

Miriam Richards, Professor, Biological Sciences, Brock University

Prof Madhur Anand, School of Environmental Sciences, University of Guelph

Dr. Christopher Guglielmo, Dept. of Biology, Western University

Dr Raquel Feroe

Prof Andrew D. Young, Ontario Agricultural College, University of Guelph

Prof Andrew MacDougall, Dept of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph

Prof Ingrid Waldron, HOPE Chair in Peace and Health, McMaster University

Dr. Joe Vipond, Clinical Asst Professor, Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary

Dr. Scott Mitchell, Department of Geography & Environmental Studies, Carleton University

Dr. Beth Savan, Sr. Fellow, Massey College, University of Toronto

Prof Lina Brand Correa, Business and Environment Diploma Coordinator, York University

Prof James Schaefer, Dept of Biology, Trent University

Prof Ranu Basu, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University

Prof Carlota McAllister, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University

Prof Luisa Sotomayor, Director, CITY Institute, York University

Kilian Stehfest, PhD

Prof Sarah Rotz, Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change, York University

Prof Jennifer Korosi, Geography and Environmental Science, York University

Prof Stefan Kipfer, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University

Prof Alice Hovorka, Dean, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University

Prof Deborah McGregor, Former Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Environmental Justice

Dr. Joshua Thienpont, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University

Prof Gregory Thiemann, Coordinator, Sustainable Enviro Management Program, York Univ

Prof Andil Gosine, Environmental Arts and Justice, York University

Prof Gail Fraser, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University

Dr. Clement Kent, York University

Dr. John Driscoll, Fisheries Science and Policy Analyst, the David Suzuki Foundation

Dr Mili Roy MD, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto

Prof Peter Mulvihill, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University

Prof Anna Zalik, Environmental & Urban Change, York University

Dr. Mahtot Gebresselassie, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University

Prof Liette Gilbert, Director, Environmental Studies Graduate Program, York University

Prof Felipe Montoya-Greenheck, Chair in Neotropical Conservation, York University

Prof Alison Bain, Graduate Program Director (Geography), York University

Prof Jeff Skevington, Research Scientist, Carleton University

Prof Ute Lehrer, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University

Dr. Ryan Prosser, School of Environmental Sciences, University of Guelph

Dr. Eileen Nicolle MD, CM, CCFP, MPH

Dr Kapil Khatter, family physician

Dr. Beth MacDougall-Shackleton, Professor of Biology, Western University

David Smookler, PhD, Clinical Research Associate, UHN's Toronto Centre for Liver Disease

Prof Patricia E. Perkins, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University

James Deutsch, MD PhD FRCPC, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Eugenie Waters, MD, CCFP – Family Medicine

Dr. Alex Duong, BSc, MD, CCFP – Family Medicine

Dr. Marlene Gottheil – Psychologist

Dr. Alison Bruni, MD, CCFP – Family Medicine

Dr. Teela Johnson, MSc, MD, CCFP-EM – Family and Hospital Medicine

Dr. Barry Bruce, MD, CCFP, FCFPC – Family Medicine

Dr. Brent Elsey, MD – Family Medicine

Dr. Nahid Azad, MD, FRCPC – Geriatric and Internal Medicine

Dr. Tyler Rouse, MD, FRCPC – Anatomical Pathology

Dr. Sehjal Bhargava, MD, CCFP – Family Medicine and Public Health and Preventive Medicine

Dr. David Rosen, MD – Family Physician

Dr Eileen Cheung, Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Toronto