

We asked our Escarpment-area MPPs for their views on the proposed legislation called the Protection of Public Participation Act. This deals with strategic lawsuits against public participation, also known as SLAPP suits. Here are some statements, from MPPs of all three parties, in alphabetical order by last name:

As one of the earliest and most vehement supporters of the Protection of Public Participation Act, I am very pleased that the Ontario Government is proceeding with this legislative initiative. SLAPP suits have been used to discourage citizens from participating in the process of opposing projects and developments to which they object and this form of intimidation should not be available to those who wish to silence legitimate objectors.
— Hon. Jim Bradley MPP,
St. Catharines, Ontario Liberal Party

The proposed legislation Protection of Public Participation Act focuses on protecting citizens against strategic litigation. I am very supportive of this proposed act because, once passed, it will allow courts to quickly identify and deal with strategic lawsuits, minimizing the emotional and financial strain on defendants, as well as the waste of court resources. Our government's intention is to strike a balance to help ensure abusive litigation is stopped but legitimate actions can continue. What we're proposing is a "made in Ontario" approach to address the issue of strategic lawsuits. By protecting citizens against strategic litigation, our government

is protecting the right of Ontario residents to speak out on matters that are important to them.
— Hon. Kevin Flynn MPP, Oakville,
Ontario Liberal Party

As the Progressive Conservative critic for the Attorney General I participated in the debate of Bill 52, the Protection of Public Participation Act last fall. Anti-SLAPP (Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation) legislation is an important tool to protect people's ability to participate in public debate. People should have the freedom to speak on an issue that may affect their community without worrying that they may be prosecuted for it. Intimidation through frivolous lawsuits is not only an injustice to the individual who is being sued but also to the principle of free speech. I believe Bill 52 strikes the right balance between dealing with potential SLAPP lawsuits, and prosecuting legitimate libel cases in a timely way through an expedited court system. If passed, Bill 52 will create a fair system that will protect both a person's ability to comment on matters in the public interest while still allowing individuals to defend themselves against slanderous comments.
— Sylvia Jones MPP, Dufferin-Caledon,
Ontario Progressive Conservative Party

I will be supporting the passage of Bill 52, the Protection of Public Participation Act, 2014, and the Ontario NDP will be working to improve the effectiveness of the bill during committee proceedings. I wholeheartedly agree that SLAPPs silence public discussion and undermine public participation on issues that are important to the public interest. SLAPPs are used to intimidate local residents or activists engaged in a fight with a developer or corporation that can afford expensive lawyers. I share your concern with the impact of these lawsuits on freedom of expression and on the accountability vital to a robust democracy. The Ontario NDP has twice in recent years introduced anti-SLAPP legislation. Quebec has already adopted an anti-SLAPP law and about half of the US states have similar laws on the books. Ontario must follow suit to protect its public sphere. I will continue to advocate for legislation that protects against SLAPPs and secures the rights of individuals to engage in legal processes that seek to defend the public interest.
— Paul Miller MPP, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, Ontario New Democratic Party

POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES

Listed by riding

Do you have a question for our provincial or federal representatives?

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