

Dear Members of Provincial Parliament,

We are writing to express our grave concern regarding the proposed legislation to “regulate” encampments. We demand that you oppose this piece of legislature.

If enacted, this legislation will:

1. Force municipalities to adopt provincial emergency management plans prioritizing the removal of encampments. Mayors or councils that fail to comply would be penalized for contravening the law.
2. Defund non-profits and other Ministry-funded entities that refuse to comply with encampment removal orders, jeopardizing critical community services.
3. Impose fines of \$5,000 on individuals who do not comply with the law.

This is a clear overreach of government unprecedented in the history of Ontario. It gives extreme powers to the provincial government to dictate how a municipality must respond to the challenges it faces and opens the door for the province to enforce its will upon municipalities under the threat of fines and legislative action. While this bill in its current form does not directly discuss encampments or homelessness, we have, under good authority, received word that Ford will be introducing legislation to fit homelessness and encampments into the jurisdiction of this bill.

This approach criminalizes our community’s and municipality’s ability to respond to issues as the situation on the ground dictates. Instead, it gives the provincial government complete authority on what is and isn’t an acceptable plan. It fails to address the actual root causes of crises. In the case of the encampment crisis, it completely ignores issues like the lack of affordable housing brought on by the housing crisis, insufficient mental health and addiction support caused by funding cuts, and systemic poverty growing due to the cost of living crisis are what make Ontarians homeless. Instead, this plan seeks the easiest, provincially mandated solutions.

Consistent states of emergency are not an inherent part of society; it is not a natural law. These issues were created and inflated by poor policy and subpar resource management. It is unthinkable that the solution is to give the same government that has made these emergencies sweeping powers to punish those trying to fix these problems. Every day, more Ontarians lose their housing while our communities lose more and more funding for services. Evicting people from encampments while there is a lack of emergency shelter, supportive housing, and affordable housing spaces under the guise of “Emergency Management” would be inhumane, harmful, and counterproductive to compassionate help.

Many local, provincial, and national peer-reviewed data and research demonstrate that responses to emergent problems such as homelessness that require violations of fundamental human rights do not work. This plan will not reduce homelessness; it will not create alternatives and is entirely counterproductive. In combination with Doug Ford’s choice to close Safe Consumption Sites across Ontario, this legislation will be lethal. It will bar those with the knowledge from solving these problems.

As residents of Southern Ontario, we have witnessed firsthand the impacts of the housing crisis and the growing number of people who are unhoused in our communities. It is no

doubt an emergency, but unlike Ford and his Conservative government, we listen to those with lived experience, we support the work of people and groups that are on the ground, and we know the solution is not yet another gross abuse of power and meddling with municipal affairs.

As your constituents, we demand that you speak out against and vote against Ford's Emergency Management plan.

Sincerely,

FightBack! KW  
Sex Worker Action Network Waterloo  
Region  
Alan Ryan People's Defense Brigade  
GroundUp Waterloo Region  
Palestinian Youth Movement WR  
Civic Hub  
A Womb With a View  
Community Fridge  
Waterloo Region Friends of Palestine  
United Front to End Homelessness  
Kitchener CTS  
Queer Youth Defense  
Willow River Centre

Independent Jewish Voices Waterloo  
Region  
Laurier Students' Public Interest  
Research Group  
Waterloo Region Labour Council  
Waterloo Region Women's Shelter  
Now!  
Out Of The Box Counselling  
Social Development Centre Waterloo  
Region  
Neighbours for Palestine: Waterloo  
Region  
The Lived Experience Working Group