

Via email to: vquioc@ola.org



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September 28th, 2015

Valerie Quioc Lim
Clerk, Standing Committee on Social Policy
Room 1405, Whitney Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2

Response of the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) to Bill 37, the proposed Invasive Species Act, 2015.

FOCA supports **Bill 37, the proposed Invasive Species Act, 2015**, and herein provides further details including a number of additional considerations, and amendments.

FOCA is an incorporated non-profit organization, a Province-wide association that represents over 500 waterfront property owners' groups, with a combined voice of over 50,000 member families. For over 50 years, FOCA has spoken on behalf of, and supported, Ontario's 250,000 waterfront property owners.

As long-standing members of the Ontario Biodiversity Council, FOCA is keenly aware that, in addition to habitat disruption and loss, and climate change, the threat from invasive species is perhaps the greatest threat to our native biota, and also poses a threat to the health of our economy.

While we recognize that the implementation will be set out in the subsequent regulations, FOCA supports the passage of this Bill. Along with our support for the passing of Bill 37, FOCA suggests:

- 1) The swift implementation and prompt enforcement of the Act as there is much to be gained by a proactive government response;

- 2) That the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) and other implicated public agencies be provided additional resources so they may achieve the desired outcomes of the Act;
- 3) Through regulations under the Act, MNRF list priority invasive species and the restrictions that would apply to the species (e.g., illegal to possess, deposit, release, transport, buy, sell, lease, trade, and propagate the species);
- 4) Enabling the Ministry to prepare provincial invasive species prevention and response plans for extremely high risk species, and enter into agreements; and
- 5) Enabling the Ministry to undertake rapid response activities such as implementing control and eradication activities.

FOCA looks forward to working with the Province to foster Ontario's commitment to conserve and protect our native biota and the ecology and economy on which they depend.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Rees". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "R".

Terry Rees, Executive Director
on behalf of the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations
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