



## Protect public participation in public decision-making Support anti-SLAPP legislation in Ontario

Strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) are lawsuits (often for defamation) that are aimed at discouraging citizens and community groups from providing their input to government, public decision-makers and others.

They are a growing threat to meaningful citizen participation in Ontario and constitute a significant barrier to access to justice for those members of the public who seek to participate in environmental law, land use planning, and other policy matters.

There is a need in Ontario to provide some reasonable protection for citizens when legally exercising their rights to engage in public discussion on matters of public interest.

Anti-SLAPP legislation is not about being anti-developer, it is a fundamental requirement for continued and meaningful public participation in public decisions.

Such legislation should protect public participation including all forms of communication to all levels of government, and all agencies mandated to make decisions on behalf of government. Further it should provide immunity from civil liability for persons engaging public participation, and should provide strong disincentives (financial and otherwise) to discourage potential SLAPP plaintiffs from initiating a meritless claim.

It is difficult enough to have meaningful and inclusive public participation in this Province, without the additional barrier of potential frivolous lawsuits.

**Talk to your MPP about supporting anti-SLAPP legislation for Ontario. For reference, see [Bill 138](#).**

*Based on notes and information from Canadian Environmental Law Association, EcoJustice, and Environmental Defence)*