

## Media Release

### Bill 154 Threatens Health, Safety and the Environment of Ontario Residents

**October 30, 2017**

**Toronto** – According to a letter sent to the Premier by sixteen environmental, health and labour organizations, Bill 154, an Act to cut unnecessary red tape, currently before the Ontario Legislature threatens the health, safety and environment of Ontario residents.

Section 2 of Schedule 4 imposes a “one-for-one and a quarter” rule for the enactment of regulatory measures. Under this provision, any “administrative burden” to businesses as a result of any new regulatory measures must be offset by a greater reduction in the “administrative burden” associated with existing regulatory measures.

Section 2 of Schedule 4 effectively requires that existing regulatory requirements be removed or weakened before new requirements can be established. Section 2 raises a very real concern that government officials will avoid these trade-offs and forego enacting regulations to protect public health and safety and the environment, even in the face of clear and pressing needs.

Theresa McClenaghan, Executive Director of the Canadian Environmental Law Association, stated, “Very similar requirements to those in Schedule 4 of the Bill were put in place in the 1990s by the Ontario government. An independent public inquiry led by Justice Dennis O’Connor determined that these requirements contributed to the Walkerton tragedy, which resulted in the death of seven people and caused 2,300 community residents to become ill from drinking water contaminated with e-coli.”

Fred Hahn, President of CUPE, noted, “The adoption of similar requirements in other jurisdictions has led to serious impacts on public health and safety. In the United Kingdom, for example, a similar rule is considered to have contributed to the U.K. government’s failure to adopt fire safety laws that could have prevented the death of 80 people in the Grenfell Tower fire earlier this year.”

Kim Perrotta, Executive Director of Canadian Physicians for the Environment, said “The Bill is a profoundly misguided approach to regulating public health. It will, in effect, result in a regulatory freeze. The government should delete Schedule 4 from the Bill.”

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