



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ontario Nature's Analysis of Bill 212 and the Highway 413 Act**  
A Fast Track to Congestion and the Destruction of Farmland and Natural Areas

**Toronto, November 22, 2024** | *Traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabeg, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat* – On November 20<sup>th</sup>, Ontario Nature and its partners, submitted their analysis of the Government of Ontario's misleadingly titled [Bill 212, Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act, 2024](#) and the [Highway 413 Act](#) on the day that the Environmental Registry of Ontario comment period closed. These proposals would expedite large infrastructure projects – such as the controversial Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass – without proper environmental assessments, Indigenous consultation and public transparency.

Falsely presented as an effort to reduce congestion in the Greater Toronto Area, these proposals would override municipal by-laws, affect property rights, threaten the Greenbelt and vital farmland, and destroy significant natural areas like the Holland Marsh. The attack on bike lanes has understandably been a flashpoint in the news, but it is only one of the many regressive aspects of Bill 212.

The Government of Ontario is seeking to rush this process without honest accounting of the true economic and environmental costs. It is well documented that more highways lead to more demand, increasing congestion. In fact, an expert panel determined that Highway 413 will only save drivers in the GTA about 30 – 60 seconds per trip. Recent polling by EOS found that 81% of respondents side with farmers in objecting to Highway 413 and that 74% agree that the Greenbelt is no place for new highways. The question becomes who the government is doing this for?

“Bill 212 and the Highway 413 Act set a dangerous precedent for major infrastructure projects in Ontario,” said Tony Morris, Ontario Nature's Director of Conservation Policy and Campaigns. “There are cheaper and more effective alternatives to alleviate congestion than building more highways. A comprehensive review of the total costs and environmental impacts is missing in the rush associated with Bill 212 and the Highway 413 Act.”

This continues a pattern of promoting sprawl and car dependency that we've seen with other changes to Ontario's planning framework and weakening of environmental protections. Farmland and natural areas in southern Ontario are already limited, so paving over more of these vital areas will jeopardize Ontario's resilience to climate change and food security. Ontario Nature calls on the Government of Ontario to abandon Bill 212 and the Highway 413 Act in favour of more cost-effective, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible solutions to traffic congestion.

– 30 –

## Background

- [Joint Letter – Bill 212, Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act](#)
- [Joint Letter – Highway 413 Act](#)

## About



Ontario Nature protects wild species and wild spaces through conservation, education and public engagement. A charitable organization, Ontario Nature represents more than 30,000 members and supporters, and 150 member groups across Ontario (charitable registration # 10737 8952 RR0001). For more information, visit [ontarionature.org](http://ontarionature.org).

### **Contact**

John Hassell, Director of Communications and Engagement, Editor  
Ontario Nature | [johnh@ontarionature.org](mailto:johnh@ontarionature.org) | 416-786-2171