

# RING OF FIRE

## SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES · BILL 5

Bill 5 creates "special economic zones" where trusted proponents and designated projects can be exempt from environmental and municipal rules that normally apply. The first zone was declared in the Ring of Fire — peatlands and rivers on Treaty 9 territory where several First Nations have not consented to development at the pace or scale proposed.

BILL 5 SEZ ACT

TREATY 9 TERRITORY

MINING & ROADS

### SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES — WHAT CHANGED

Source: Legislative Assembly of Ontario — Bill 5 (ola.org); CBC on Ring of Fire SEZ (2025).

- Bill 5's Special Economic Zones Act lets the province designate areas where projects can bypass rules that normally apply — including environmental and municipal requirements.
- The first special economic zone was declared in the Ring of Fire, a region of peatlands and rivers on Treaty 9 territory.
- SEZs are not empty land — they are home territories, traplines, burial sites, and watersheds.
- Once a zone is declared, local democratic control and standard environmental review are permanently weakened.
- Ontario Nature and the David Suzuki Foundation have called for repeal of Bill 5's environmental rollbacks.

### RING OF FIRE DEVELOPMENT

Source: CBC; The Canadian Encyclopedia — Ring of Fire; Bill 5 Mining Act amendments.

- The Ring of Fire is promoted as a critical minerals hub — roads, power lines, and mines across the Far North.
- Building infrastructure affects water flowing south, caribou habitat, and communities that depend on both.
- Bill 5 changes the Mining Act to prioritize protecting "Ontario's economy" and to speed approvals.
- The Crown has a legal duty to consult when Indigenous rights may be affected — consultation is not the same as consent.
- Several First Nations have not consented to development at the current pace or scale.

### TREATY RIGHTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Source: UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP); Ontario's Action Plan on UNDRIP.

- Free, prior, and informed consent is a treaty obligation and human rights standard — not optional consultation after decisions are made.
- Bill 5 extinguishes certain causes of action — limiting communities' ability to seek redress when harmed.
- Weakened species protection under Bill 5 compounds risks to caribou, wetlands, and northern river systems.
- Water contamination risk in peatland watersheds affects downstream communities for generations.
- Full background: [protectont.ca/indigenous-rights](https://protectont.ca/indigenous-rights) · [protectont.ca/wildlife](https://protectont.ca/wildlife)

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Stand with Indigenous nations leading on their own terms.

- Contact your MPP: demand repeal of Bill 5 and an end to special economic zones without consent.
- Listen to and share statements from affected First Nations — follow their leadership, not provincial talking points.

### TAKE THE NEXT STEP

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