

# Queen's Park Report



**Noel Duignan MPP  
Halton North**

Early last month, Environment Minister Ruth Grier released the "Report of the Task Force on the Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights." The report contains a draft bill and came about as a result of the work of representatives from key environmental groups, the major industry associations, the Ministry of the Environment, and the legal profession.

The Task Force was established last October with instructions to incorporate a number of important principles into the legislation. The Report was reached with the consensus of all Task Force members and the draft bill proposes to do the following:

- increase public participation in significant environmental decision-making.

- create an Environmental Registry where the public can learn about impending government policy decisions, regulations, and significant permits which will affect the environment.

- give the public the right to request a review of existing regulation.

- give the public the right to initiate an investigation of alleged incidents of environmental harm.

- increase public access to the courts where someone has violated an Act, regulation, or permit and where the government has failed to protect public resources.

- increase protection for employees who report environmental harm in their workplaces.

- establish an Environmental Commissioner to provide government accountability to ensure the government lives up to its obligations under the new Environmental

## Bill of Rights.

—require that government ministries establish Statements of Environmental Values.

The Task Force report containing the draft legislation is available for public input. Following this consultation, and an evaluation of these comments, Ontario's first Environmental Bill of Rights will be introduced into the legislature for first reading.

You can ask for your copy of the material by phoning the Environmental Bill of Rights hotline at 1-800-565-4860 or by faxing the Ministry of the Environment at 1-416-323-4654. Written comments can be submitted until October 16 to Environmental Bill of Rights, Attention: Ruth Grier, Minister of the Environment, 135 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5.

We're also revising Ontario's bicycle policy to support the bicycle as an integral mode of transportation and not simply as a recreation vehicle. The policy had not been examined in 10 years and conditions have changed since then.

Public interest in bicycle safety, the potential for environmental benefits from cycling, and the indi-

cations of increased cycle usage as a transportation alternative all helped warrant a bicycle policy review.

The new policy is a significant shift in thinking. Municipalities now can consider bicycle facilities, such as bike lanes and paths, when planning local roads or transit projects. And the new policy ensures these facilities are eligible for funding.

The Ministry of Transportation will also work with municipalities to look for opportunities to promote bicycle transportation when they plan, build or upgrade provincial transportation systems. The policy changes makes good sense for our environment and our health.

Bicycle safety was also a component of the policy review. In 1990, 29 cyclists died in collisions with motor vehicles and 3,700 were injured. Bicycle safety through public education will continue to be a priority of the Ministry and the issue of mandatory helmets is being examined by the Standing Committee on Resource Development.

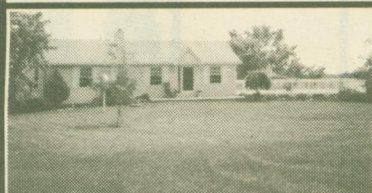
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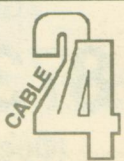


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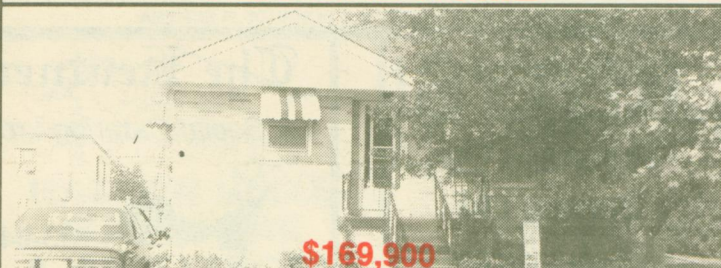
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