



# Climate Reason #7 to Defeat Ford

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# REASON NUMBER 7

## 7. Ford is destroying the biosphere: forests and peatlands are on the list

Pathways to a livable future start with a fundamental change in our relationship with nature. The climate crisis has put waterways and oceans at severe risk. The biosphere is compromised in dangerous ways. More and more species face extinction and the next pandemic is waiting in the wings.

There is a consensus of scientific opinion that, in both mitigation and adaptation terms, 'nature-based solutions,' are vital to preventing climate collapse. In Ontario, the urgent calls for protection, conservation and restoration of natural areas and habitats have fallen on deaf ears. ([Link to Climate Crime #22](#))

Southern Ontario's average temperatures are rising at twice the global average, while northern Ontario's are rising at three times the global average. The Ford government's resource extraction policies increase those risks.

### **Forestry: Turning a Carbon Sink into a Bigger Carbon Source**

Ontario's massive boreal forest has taken carbon from the atmosphere and stored it safely away in the wood of trees and the soils of forests. Until now. The government's forestry policy is turning this essential carbon sink into a carbon bomb by encouraging more 'cut and run' logging.

The Ford government's forest policy is called: "Sustainable Growth: Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy". ([Link to Climate Crime #14](#))

As is often the case with Ford's choice of titles, it actually means the opposite. The goal of the strategy is to double industrial logging and turn much of the province's managed boreal forest into toilet paper and 2x4s.

The crime in this case is not only what is happening, but the efforts the government has made to cover it up. The government is deregulating crown land, promoting clear-cutting, and hiding it all in omnibus legislation and happy sounding titles.

The government's approach is designed to clear the regulatory path for increased levels of resource extraction. In the process, the government has exempted Crown Land forestry projects from environmental assessment regulations. It has weakened protections of the Endangered Species Act from industrial forestry activities.

There are competing world views. One recognizes that forests are living ecosystems essential to the health of the biosphere, a stable climate and all life on the planet.



This view also recognizes the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples over their traditional territory, including the right to full, prior, and informed consent to all resource extraction related projects on said traditional territory.

The other view is Ford's climate-blind Forestry Strategy that treats Indigenous communities as bystanders, or standing in the way of more and bigger resource extraction projects.

## **Ring of Fire**

The mining industry has dubbed an area, about 750 km northwest of Thunder Bay, as "the Ring of Fire". First Nations, on the other hand, know it as the "Breathing Lands". For Ford and large foreign mining companies the area is a multi-billion-dollar resource "jackpot"; for Indigenous peoples it is home and a natural ecosystem that needs to be preserved. ([Link to Climate Crime #9](#))

In spite of serious environmental and climate consequences, the Ford government is committed to accelerating mining development in the area without first obtaining consent of Indigenous communities and nations, and without assessing the risks of methane release from disturbed peat lands.

Ford himself famously threatened, during the last Provincial election, to drive the bulldozers himself if the so-called "red tape" standing in the way of development wasn't cut.

To accelerate expanded resource extraction, Ford recently amended the Far North Act through Build Ontario (Bill 43) which became law in December 2021. This omnibus legislation "streamlines" planning processes and removes over 225,000 sq. km. of land in Northern Ontario from protection.