Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Bill 155

An Act to enact the Ontario Northland Transportation Corporation Act, 2026 and the Respecting Rural Ontario Act, 2026 and to amend various other Acts

The Hon. G. Pirie
Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth

Government Bill

1st Reading	November 23, 2026
2nd Reading	
3rd Reading	
Royal Assent	



EXPLANATORY NOTE

SCHEDULE 1
CROWN FOREST SUSTAINABILITY ACT, 1994

The Schedule re-enacts subsection 27 (4) of the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994* to provide that the Minister may now also renew a licence issued under subsection 27 (1) of the Act in the circumstances specified by the regulations. The Minister is also granted a new related regulation-making power under subsection 69 (1.1) of the Act to establish a registration system governing renewals under subsection 27 (4) (b). Paragraph 32 of subsection 69 (1) of the Act, which provides regulation-making authority to the Lieutenant Governor in Council governing the harvesting and disposition of trees that are not in Crown forests but are reserved to the Crown, is repealed.

SCHEDULE 2
FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ACT, 1997

The Schedule makes various amendments to the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997*. Here are some highlights:

1. A new definition of "justice" is added to subsection 1 (1) of the Act and various related provisions are amended.
2. A new clause (e) is added to subsection 5 (2) of the Act providing an exception to the prohibition against hunting or trapping specially protected wildlife, but only in the circumstances prescribed by the regulations.
3. Subsection 8 (4) of the Act is re-enacted to additionally provide that subsection 8 (3) does not apply to a person who damages or destroys a beaver dam in the circumstances prescribed by the regulations.
4. Subsection 31 (2) of the Act is amended to remove the ability to authorize additional agents outside of the classes already prescribed by the regulations to harass, capture or kill wildlife in protection of property.
5. A new section 91.2 is added authorizing a justice to issue an order to a person, other than a person under investigation for an offence, requiring them to produce documents or prepare documents to support investigations.
6. A new regulation-making power is added to subsection 112 (1) of the Act authorizing the Lieutenant Governor in Council to establish a registration system for the purposes of the Act requiring the registration of activities, information, records, reports and other documents.

SCHEDULE 3
HIGHWAY TRAFFIC ACT

The Schedule amends the *Highway Traffic Act* in respect of vehicle inspection centres. Provisions are added to permit the suspension of registered technicians who inspect vehicles and issue inspection certificates and to permit the Director of Vehicle Inspection Standards to delegate the director's powers to a public servant.

The Act is also amended to provide for a penalty of between $200 and $1,000 for contravening certain provisions relating to noise and smoke caused by motor vehicles and motor assisted bicycles.

SCHEDULE 4
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS ACT

The Schedule amends the *Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act*. Previously, section 6.2 of the Act required the Minister to make an order to establish a program. That section is amended to allow the Minister to establish programs without an order. Section 7 of the Act, which allowed the Lieutenant Governor in Council to establish a program by order, is repealed. New transition rules with respect to programs are added and related changes are made to the Act.

SCHEDULE 5
NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND ACT

The Schedule amends the *Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Act*. Amendments are made to provide for a vice-chair of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation's board of directors. A new section is added to provide guidance to the Corporation with respect to the use of money in the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

SCHEDULE 6
ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION CORPORATION ACT, 2026

The Schedule enacts the *Ontario Northland Transportation Corporation Act, 2026*. The Act continues the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission as the Ontario Northland Transportation Corporation, a corporation without share capital and an agent of the Crown.

The Act sets out the Corporation's objects, which include providing transportation services, particularly in northern Ontario, constructing, operating and maintaining transportation infrastructure, supporting integrated and multimodal transportation systems, managing its property, manufacturing and repairing transportation-related assets and carrying out other prescribed or

assigned activities. The Act also provides the Corporation with the powers necessary to carry out its objects and authorizes it to expropriate land for that purpose.

The Act establishes a governance framework for the Corporation, including provisions respecting its board of directors, officers, meetings and by-laws. It also includes provisions respecting planning, accountability, reporting and financial matters, including audits, budgets and the payment of net profits into the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The Act provides the Minister with oversight powers, including the power to issue directives to the Corporation and require reports and information.

The Act authorizes the Corporation to appoint compliance officers and establishes an enforcement regime that includes offences and administrative penalties. The Act also contains provisions respecting service, liability protection and immunity from proceedings.

The Act includes transition provisions and regulation-making authorities. The Schedule also makes a consequential amendment to the *Mining Act* and repeals the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act*.

SCHEDULE 7
PUBLIC LANDS ACT

The Schedule amends the *Public Lands Act*. Some of the more significant amendments are described below.

The new section 23.1 provides that no person shall occupy public lands without authorization and the new section 26.1 provides that no person shall park, place or leave unattended a conveyance, structure or other thing in a location where to do so would hinder or block access to public lands.

Section 52 is amended to provide that despite the closure of a road under that section, a person may apply for a permit to travel on the road. The district manager or their delegate may issue the permit subject to terms and conditions or refuse to issue the permit. If they have not issued the permit or notified an applicant of their decision to refuse to issue the permit within the prescribed period, the Ministry shall issue the permit subject to any prescribed terms and conditions unless an exception set out in the section applies.

The new subsection 58 (3.1) provides that a reservation of all timber and trees or any class or kind of tree contained in letters patent dated after the 1st day of April, 1869 and granting a freehold interest in public lands disposed of under any Act is void. The new subsection 58 (5) sets out exceptions to subsections 58 (1) to (3.1).

The new section 69.5 provides for inspections, the new section 70.0.1 provides for investigative warrants, the new section 70.0.2 provides for production orders and the new section 70.0.3 sets out rules related to seizure and forfeiture. Section 70.3 is amended to increase the amounts of fines under that section. The new section 70.3.1 provides that the owner of a conveyance may be charged with and convicted of an offence for which the operator of the conveyance is subject to be charged under the Act or the regulations. The new section 70.3.2 provides for the imposition of administrative penalties for contraventions of and failures to comply with the Act or the regulations.

SCHEDULE 8
RESPECTING RURAL ONTARIO ACT, 2026

The Schedule enacts the *Respecting Rural Ontario Act, 2026*. Section 2 of the Act permits the Minister to establish and maintain programs in respect of rural economic development and deems the Rural Ontario Development Program to be such a program. Section 3 of the Act permits the Minister to establish advisory bodies. Under section 4 of the Act the Rural Economic Development Advisory Panel is continued as an advisory body named the Rural Ontario Advisory Panel and certain rules and requirements with respect to that body are established. The Act also proclaims the third full week in September as Rural Ontario Week.

Bill 155 **2026**

An Act to enact the Ontario Northland Transportation Corporation Act, 2026 and the Respecting Rural Ontario Act, 2026 and to amend various other Acts

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Preamble

The Government of Ontario is committed to:

Recognizing and supporting the contributions of the people and businesses of rural and Northern Ontario.

Advancing long-term prosperity and economic opportunities in rural and northern communities and other parts of the Province by cutting red tape, strengthening regional transportation networks and supporting responsive and effective services.

Therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Contents of this Act

1 This Act consists of this section, sections 2 and 3, and the Schedules to this Act.

Commencement

2 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, this Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

(2) The Schedules to this Act come into force as provided in each Schedule.

(3) If a Schedule to this Act provides that any of its provisions are to come into force on a day to be named by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, an order may apply to one or more of those provisions, and orders may be issued at different times with respect to any of those provisions.

Short title

3 The short title of this Act is the *Protect Ontario's Northern and Rural Communities Act, 2026*.

SCHEDULE 1
CROWN FOREST SUSTAINABILITY ACT, 1994

1 Subsection 27 (4) of the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994* is repealed and the following substituted:

Renewal of licence

(4) The Minister may renew a licence issued under subsection (1),

(a) for one term of up to two years, subject to such terms and conditions as may be specified by the Minister, if the harvesting or use of the resources authorized by the licence under this section is not completed before the licence expires; or

(b) in the circumstances specified by the regulations.

2 (1) Paragraph 32 of subsection 69 (1) of the Act is repealed.

(2) Subsection 69 (1.1) of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

(1.1) The Minister may make regulations,

(a) approving a manual prepared under section 68 or an amendment to a manual;

(b) governing renewals under clause 27 (4) (b) including,

(i) requiring that applicants for renewal satisfy conditions and requirements; and

(ii) establishing a registration system requiring that applicants for renewal register information or documents in accordance with the regulations and specifying the manner and form of registrations.

Commencement

3 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, this Schedule comes into force on the day the *Protect Ontario's Northern and Rural Communities Act, 2026* receives Royal Assent.

(2) Subsection 2 (1) comes into force on a day to be named by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

SCHEDULE 2
FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ACT, 1997

1 Subsection 1 (1) of the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997* is amended by adding the following definition:

"justice" has the same meaning as in the *Provincial Offences Act*; ("juge")

2 Subsection 5 (2) of the Act is amended by striking out "or" at the end of clause (c), by adding "or" at the end of clause (d) and by adding the following clause:

(e) specially protected wildlife in the circumstances prescribed by the regulations.

3 Subsection 8 (4) of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

Exceptions

(4) Subsection (3) does not apply to,

(a) a person, or the agent of a person, who damages or destroys a beaver dam to protect the person's property; or

(b) a person who damages or destroys a beaver dam in the circumstances prescribed by the regulations.

4 (1) Subsection 31 (2) of the Act is amended by striking out "has the authorization of the Minister or".

(2) Subsection 31 (7) of the Act is repealed.

5 Subsection 62 (5) of the Act is amended by striking out "The holder of a licence or authorization" at the beginning and substituting "Every person acting under the authority of a licence or authorization".

6 Subsection 90 (4) of the Act is amended by striking out "of the peace" after "justice" in the portion before clause (a).

7 Subsection 91.1 (1) of the Act is amended by striking out "a justice, as defined in the *Provincial Offences Act*, may" in the portion before clause (a) and substituting "a justice may".

8 The Act is amended by adding the following section:

Production Orders

91.2 (1) On application without notice and subject to subsection (3), a justice may issue an order to a person, other than a person under investigation for an offence, requiring the person to,

(a) produce documents or copies of documents, certified by affidavit to be true copies, or produce data; or

(b) prepare a document based on documents or data already in existence and produce it.

Content of order

(2) An order under subsection (1) shall require the documents or data to be produced within the time, at the place and in the form specified in the order and require that it be given to a conservation officer named in the order.

Grounds for order

(3) A justice may make an order under subsection (1) if the justice is satisfied by information given under oath or affirmation that there are reasonable grounds to believe that,

(a) an offence under this Act has been or is being committed;

(b) the documents or data will provide evidence respecting the offence or suspected offence; and

(c) the person who is subject to the order has possession or control of the documents or data.

Conditions

(4) An order under subsection (1) may contain such conditions as the justice considers advisable.

Evidence

(5) A copy of a document produced under this section, on proof by affidavit that it is a true copy, is admissible in evidence in proceedings under this Act and has the same probative force as the original document would have if it had been proved in the ordinary way.

No return of copies

(6) Copies of documents produced under this section are not required to be returned to the person who provided them.

9 Subsection 92 (18) of the Act is repealed.

10 (1) Subsection 112 (1) of the Act is amended by adding the following paragraphs:

3.1 prescribing the circumstances in which a person may hunt or trap specially protected wildlife under clause 5 (2) (e);

. . . . .

6.2 prescribing the circumstances in which a person may damage or destroy a beaver dam under clause 8 (4) (b);

. . . . .

13.1 prescribing, for the purposes of subsection 20 (2), circumstances in which subsection 20 (1) does not apply;

. . . . .

36.1 prescribing the circumstances in which a person may buy or sell game wildlife or specially protected wildlife without a licence under subsection 48 (5);

. . . . .

51.1 establishing a registration system for the purposes of this Act requiring the registration of activities, information, records, reports and other documents, including governing,

i. the manner and form of registrations and compliance with registration requirements,

ii. the issuance of confirmations of registration and the carrying, production and retention of such confirmations, and

iii. the renewal, updating, amendment, suspension, removal, cancellation, term and validity of registrations;

(2) Paragraph 54 of subsection 112 (1) of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

54. prescribing exemptions from subsection 5 (1), 6 (1), 7 (1), 9 (1) or (2) or 10 (7), clauses 11 (1) (a) to (d) or clause 17 (1) (a), or subsection 20 (1), 24 (2) or (3), 25 (1), 29 (1), 30 (1), 32 (2), 33 (1), 34 (1), 36 (3) or (5), 37 (1), 40 (1) or (3), 41 (1), 45 (1), 46 (1), 47 (1), 48 (1), 51 (1), 52 (1), 54 (1), 55 (1), 57 (1), 63 (1) or 64 (1), subject to such conditions as are prescribed by the regulations;

Commencement

11 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, this Schedule comes into force on the day the *Protect Ontario's Northern and Rural Communities Act, 2026* receives Royal Assent.

(2) Subsection 4 (2) comes into force on a day to be named by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

SCHEDULE 3
HIGHWAY TRAFFIC ACT

1 Section 75 of the *Highway Traffic Act* is amended by adding the following subsection:

Penalty

(7) Every person who contravenes subsection (1) or (4) is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not less than $200 and not more than $1,000.

2 Section 100.2 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

Delegation

(2.1) The Director of Vehicle Inspection Standards may, with the Minister's approval, delegate any or all of the Director's powers and duties under this Act to a public servant employed under Part III of the *Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006* who works in the Ministry, subject to any conditions or restrictions set out in the delegation.

3 (1) Subsection 100.4 (2) of the Act is amended by adding "whose registration is not suspended" at the end.

(2) Clause 100.4 (3) (a) of the Act is amended by adding "whose registration is not suspended" after "registered technician".

4 Subclause 100.8 (1) (d) (ii) of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

(ii) refuse to register a person as a vehicle inspection centre technician, refuse to renew a person's registration or suspend or revoke a person's registration;

Commencement

5 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, this Schedule comes into force on the day the *Protect Ontario's Northern and Rural Communities Act, 2026* receives Royal Assent.

(2) Section 1 comes into force on July 1, 2027.

SCHEDULE 4
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS ACT

1 (1) Subsection 6.2 (1) of the *Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act* is amended by striking out "may, by order, establish" and substituting "may establish".

(2) Subsections 6.2 (2) and (2.1) of the Act are repealed.

(3) Subsection 6.2 (3) of the Act is amended by striking the portion before clause (a) and substituting the following:

Fees

(3) The Minister may,

. . . . .

(4) Clause 6.2 (3) (a) of the Act is amended by striking out "the program" and substituting "a program".

(5) Subsection 6.2 (4) of the Act is amended by striking out the portion before paragraph 1 and substituting the following:

Delegation of program administration

(4) The Minister may delegate the administration of a program to any of the following persons:

. . . . .

(6) Subsection 6.2 (5.1) of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

Management of fund

(5.1) The Minister may designate a person to manage a fund in connection with the program known as the Risk Management Program regardless of whether the person is a person described in subsection (4) or 5 (1).

(7) Subsections 6.2 (6) and (7) of the Act are repealed.

2 Section 7 of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

Transition

Definition

7 (1) In this section,

"transition day" means the day subsection 1 (1) of Schedule 4 to the *Protect Ontario's Northern and Rural Communities Act, 2026* came into force.

Deeming of programs

(2) A program is deemed to be a program established by the Minister under subsection 6.2 (1) if the program was in effect on transition day and the program was,

(a) established by an order of the Minister under subsection 6.2 (1), as it read immediately before transition day;

(b) established by an order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council under subsection 7 (1), as it read immediately before transition day; or

(c) deemed, under subsection 7 (8), as it read immediately before transition day, to have been established by an order of the Minister.

3 Section 9 of the Act is amended by striking out "section 7" and substituting "this Act".

Commencement

4 This Schedule comes into force on the day the *Protect Ontario's Northern and Rural Communities Act, 2026* receives Royal Assent.

SCHEDULE 5
NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND ACT

1 Section 3 of the *Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Act* is amended by adding the following subsections:

Same

(5) The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall designate one of the directors appointed under subsection (3) to serve as vice-chair of the board of directors.

Same

(6) If the chair is absent or otherwise unable to act, or if the office is vacant, the vice-chair shall act in place of the chair.

2 The Act is amended by adding the following section:

Guidance for Corporation

7.1 Recognizing the significant economic potential of Northern Ontario, its people and its communities, and that Northern Ontario is home to numerous key industries, including mining, forestry, agriculture, tourism and manufacturing, which contribute substantially to the Province's economy and long-term prosperity, the Corporation shall, in using money deposited in the Fund to further the object set out in clause 5 (b), prioritize economic initiatives that promote economic development, innovation, job growth or strategic community enhancement for the benefit of Northern Ontario's people, industries or communities.

Commencement

3 This Schedule comes into force on the day the *Protect Ontario's Northern and Rural Communities Act, 2026* receives Royal Assent.

SCHEDULE 6
ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION CORPORATION ACT, 2026

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PART I
INTERPRETATION

Interpretation

1 (1) In this Act,

"board" means the board of directors established under section 9; ("conseil")

"compliance officer" means a person appointed under subsection 31 (1); ("agent de conformité")

"Corporation" means the corporation continued under section 2; ("Société")

"director" means a member of the board of directors appointed under section 9; ("administrateur")

"Minister" means the Minister of Transportation or such other member of the Executive Council to whom responsibility for the administration of this Act may be assigned or transferred under the *Executive Council Act*; ("ministre")

"ONTC transportation service" means any of the following transportation services that involves the movement of persons or goods and that is provided by the Corporation or on its behalf:

1. Freight and passenger rail services.
2. Motorcoach and other bus services.
3. Ferry services and any air services necessary to replace ferry services, including air services provided during seasonal interruptions of ferry services.
4. Any other prescribed transportation services; ("service de transport de la Société")

"prescribed" means prescribed by the regulations; ("prescrit")

"regulations" means the regulations under this Act. ("règlements")

By-laws are not regulations

(2) Part III (Regulations) of the *Legislation Act, 2006* does not apply to by-laws passed by the board or directives issued by the Minister under this Act.

PART II
CONTINUANCE OF THE CORPORATION

Corporation continued

2 The corporation known under the name Ontario Northland Transportation Commission in English and Commission de transport Ontario Northland in French is continued as a corporation without share capital under the name Ontario Northland Transportation Corporation in English and Société de transport Ontario Northland in French.

Crown agent

3 The Corporation is an agent of the Crown.

Objects

4 (1) The Corporation has the following objects:

1. To provide ONTC transportation services, particularly services to, from or across northern Ontario.
2. To construct, operate and maintain transportation infrastructure owned or operated by the Corporation, and to support the construction, operation and maintenance of other transportation infrastructure used in connection with providing ONTC transportation services.
3. To integrate transportation infrastructure owned or operated by the Corporation with other transportation infrastructure in a manner that,
    i. encourages the development or use of multimodal transportation systems,
    ii. results in transportation services that connect individuals with services such as health care, education, employment and housing, and
    iii. promotes access to and from communities with limited transportation services, including remote communities and Indigenous communities.
4. To manage any property owned or controlled by the Corporation, including using the property in support of an activity that the Corporation is required or authorized to carry out under this Act.
5. To manufacture, remanufacture and repair assets that are related to transportation or the transportation industry.
6. To operate hotels, motels, inns or similar types of accommodation that are intended to primarily serve passengers using an ONTC transportation service, if directed to do so by the Minister.
7. To conduct such further activities, consistent with its objects, as are described in any policies or directives issued by the Minister or as set out in any agreement with the Minister.
8. To engage in any other activity assigned to the Corporation under this Act.
9. Any other prescribed objects.

Legacy activities, directives

(2) Despite paragraph 8 of subsection (1), engaging in a legacy activity described in section 54 or an activity set out in a directive issued by the Minister under this Act is not an object of the Corporation for the purposes of that paragraph.

Carrying out objects

(3) The Corporation shall carry out its objects in a manner that,

(a) is consistent with any applicable provincial transportation policies, plans and strategies;

(b) provides and promotes efficient, safe, reliable and affordable ONTC transportation services; and

(c) promotes a high quality of life, a sustainable environment and a strong, prosperous and competitive economy.

Ancillary and incidental activities

(4) The Corporation may engage in any activity that is incidental to or ancillary to,

(a) carrying out its objects; or

(b) carrying out any activity that the Corporation is required or authorized to carry out under this Act or the regulations.

Powers

5 (1) The Corporation has the capacity, rights, powers and privileges of a natural person for carrying out its objects or any activity that it is required or authorized to carry out under this Act and the regulations, subject to any limitations set out in this Act or the regulations.

Minister's approval for acquiring real property

(2) The Corporation shall not acquire a freehold interest in real property without the approval of the Minister.

Lieutenant Governor in Council's approval for disposing of real property

(3) The Corporation shall not dispose of a freehold interest in real property without the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Exception, disposing of mining rights etc.

(4) Subsection (3) does not apply in respect of disposing of mines, minerals or mining rights.

Nipissing Central Railway Company agreements

(5) Subject to the approval of the Minister, the Corporation may enter into an agreement with the Nipissing Central Railway Company to acquire, lease or otherwise deal with the railway and the undertakings of the Nipissing Central Railway Company in whole or in part and, on the acquisition, lease or other dealing, may operate the railway and undertakings in the same manner and, subject to the agreement, to the same extent as if they formed part of the Ontario Northland Railway.

Limit on powers, subsidiaries

6 The Corporation shall not create, acquire, divest or dissolve a subsidiary without the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

By-laws re ONTC transportation services and property

7 (1) The board may pass by-laws,

(a) establishing the approximate location, route or frequency of an ONTC transportation service;

(b) establishing fares for ONTC transportation services and governing the terms and conditions applicable to tickets and passes;

(c) terminating an ONTC transportation service;

(d) respecting the use of, or presence in or on, any property that is owned or controlled by the Corporation or that is or may be used in connection with an ONTC transportation service, including,

(i) restricting or refusing access to the property,

(ii) controlling vehicular or pedestrian traffic on the property, or

(iii) removing persons from the property;

(e) respecting the conduct of persons using or seeking to use an ONTC transportation service;

(f) respecting the circumstances in which access to or use of ONTC transportation services may be refused or restricted, including for safety, security or failure to comply with the Corporation's by-laws; and

(g) respecting any other prescribed matter.

Requirement to give notice

(2) The Corporation shall give written notice to the Minister before the board passes, amends or revokes a by-law described in subsection (1).

Minister approval

(3) A by-law relating to a matter specified in a regulation made by the Minister does not take effect until the by-law is approved by the Minister.

Conflict

(4) A regulation made under section 57 prevails over a by-law passed under subsection (1) to the extent of any inconsistency.

Expropriation

8 Subject to the *Expropriations Act*, the Corporation may expropriate land for the purposes of carrying out its objects.

PART III
GOVERNANCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Composition of board

9 The board of directors of the Corporation shall consist of at least three and not more than 11 members appointed at pleasure by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister.

Remuneration and reimbursement

10 The Corporation shall pay the directors such remuneration and reimbursement for reasonable expenses as is determined by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Chair and vice-chair

11 On the recommendation of the Minister, the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall designate a chair from among the directors and may designate a vice-chair from among the directors.

Vacancies

12 (1) If the chair is absent or unable to act, or if the office of the chair is vacant, and a vice-chair has been designated, the vice-chair shall act as chair.

Same

(2) If the chair is absent or unable to act and the vice-chair is absent or unable to act or no vice-chair has been designated, the directors present shall appoint an acting chair from among themselves.

Duties

13 The board shall manage or supervise the management of the Corporation's affairs in accordance with any applicable laws, the Corporation's by-laws and any applicable directive issued by the Minister or the Management Board of Cabinet.

Application and non-application of certain Acts

14 (1) The following Acts do not apply to the Corporation or its subsidiaries except as prescribed:

1. *Corporations Information Act*.
2. *Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010*.
3. *The Railways Act*, being chapter 331 of the Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1950.
4. *Shortline Railways Act, 1995*.

Business Corporations Act

(2) Section 132 (conflict of interest), subsections 134 (1) and (3) (standards of care, etc., of directors, etc.), section 136 (indemnification) and any other prescribed provisions of the *Business Corporations Act* apply, with necessary modifications and any prescribed modifications, to the Corporation, its subsidiaries and their directors and officers.

MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES

Board meetings closed to the public unless specified

15 The meetings of the board shall be closed to the public except in the circumstances set out in a by-law made under clause 17 (2) (d).

Quorum

16 A majority of the directors constitutes a quorum of the board.

By-laws re governance

17 (1) The board may pass by-laws governing its proceedings and respecting the conduct and management of the Corporation's affairs.

Same

(2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the board may pass by-laws,

(a) appointing officers and assigning to them such powers and duties as the board considers appropriate;

(b) establishing committees of the board;

(c) effecting the orderly transaction of the business of the Corporation; and

(d) specifying circumstances in which meetings of the board must be open to the public.

Financial by-laws

18 A by-law relating to borrowing, investing or managing financial risks does not take effect until it is approved by the Minister of Finance.

OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

Chief executive officer

19 (1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall, on the recommendation of the Minister, appoint a chief executive officer of the Corporation and the chief executive officer shall be an employee of the Corporation.

Duties

(2) The chief executive officer is responsible for the operation of the Corporation, subject to the supervision and direction of the board.

Limitations

(3) The chief executive officer may attend and participate at any meeting of the board but shall not have a vote with respect to any matter to be decided at the meeting.

Same

(4) Despite subsection (3), the directors may exclude the chief executive officer from attending all or part of a board meeting if a matter to be discussed involves the position, performance, powers, duties or functions of the chief executive officer.

Remuneration and benefits

(5) The chief executive officer shall be paid such remuneration and benefits as may be determined by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Employees

20 The Corporation may employ or otherwise engage persons as it considers necessary for the proper conduct of the business of the Corporation.

PART IV
PLANNING, ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

Annual report

21 (1) The Corporation shall prepare an annual report, provide it to the Minister and make it available to the public.

Directives re report

(2) The Corporation shall comply with such directives as may be issued by the Management Board of Cabinet respecting the form and content of the annual report and the time and manner in which it is to be provided to the Minister and made available to the public.

Additional content

(3) The Corporation shall include such additional content in the report as the Minister may require.

Tabling of report

(4) The Minister shall table the report in the Assembly and shall comply with such directives as may be issued by the Management Board of Cabinet with respect to when to table it.

PART V
FINANCIAL MATTERS

Fiscal year

22 The Corporation's fiscal year begins on April 1 in each year and ends on March 31 in the following year.

Revenues

23 (1) The revenue of the Corporation shall be applied to carrying out its objects.

Revenues not part of Consolidated Revenue Fund

(2) Despite Part I of the *Financial Administration Act*, the revenue and assets of the Corporation do not form part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Administrative penalties

(3) Despite subsection (2) and subject to the regulations, the Corporation shall pay into the Consolidated Revenue Fund all money received from administrative penalties.

Special purpose

(4) A regulation made for the purposes of subsection (3) may permit money to not be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund and may require that it be used for a specified purpose.

Payments into Consolidated Revenue Fund

24 (1) The Corporation's net profits shall be determined and paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund at such times and in such manner as the Lieutenant Governor in Council may direct.

Financial reports

(2) The Corporation shall, on request, submit a report to the Minister of Finance by the date specified in the request, setting out the Corporation's net profit and net profit forecasts and containing such additional financial information as the Minister of Finance may request.

Budget and other financial information

25 (1) On or before September 30 in each year, or another date specified by the Minister, the Corporation shall submit its budget for the following fiscal year, or for any other period of time specified by the Minister, to the Minister for approval.

Form and content of budget

(2) The budget shall be in the form required by the Minister and shall include any other information required by the Minister.

Co-ordination of certain financial activities

26 (1) The Ontario Financing Authority shall co-ordinate and arrange all borrowing, financing, investing of funds and managing of financial risks of the Corporation and its subsidiaries.

Same

(2) The Minister of Finance may, in writing, direct a person other than the Ontario Financing Authority to perform the functions referred to in subsection (1).

Audit

27 (1) The board shall,

(a) request that the Auditor General audit the accounts and transactions of the Corporation and each of its subsidiaries for the previous fiscal year; or

(b) appoint one or more licensed public accountants to audit the accounts and transactions of the Corporation and each of its subsidiaries for the previous fiscal year.

Auditor General

(2) The Auditor General may at any time audit the accounts and transactions of the Corporation or any of its subsidiaries for any fiscal year even if not requested to do so under clause (1) (a).

Minister-appointed auditor

(3) The Minister may at any time appoint a licensed public accountant, other than a person appointed under clause (1) (b), to audit the accounts and transactions of the Corporation for any period of time specified by the Minister.

Same

(4) If the Auditor General conducts an audit under this section or the Minister appoints an auditor under subsection (3), the Corporation shall give the Auditor General or auditor and employees of the Auditor General or auditor access to all records and other information required to conduct the audit.

PART VI
MINISTERIAL OVERSIGHT AND POWERS

Minister's directives

28 (1) The Minister may issue written directives to the Corporation that relate to the Corporation's objects, duties, operations, activities, financial affairs and any other matter under this Act, which may include directions with respect to the timing or manner of implementing the directives.

Same

(2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the Minister may issue directives requiring the Corporation to support,

(a) transportation services not provided by the Corporation; and

(b) the construction, operation or maintenance of transportation infrastructure not owned or operated by the Corporation.

Compliance with directives

29 The board shall ensure that the Minister's directives are implemented promptly and efficiently.

Minister may require reports, information

30 The Minister may require the Corporation to, within the time and in the manner the Minister may specify, report on or provide any information on its operations, activities and financial affairs.

PART VII
ENFORCEMENT

COMPLIANCE OFFICERS

Compliance officers

31 (1) The Corporation may appoint one or more compliance officers for the purposes of administering and enforcing this Act, the regulations and the by-laws and any person so appointed has authority to act as a constable throughout Ontario for those purposes.

Powers and duties

(2) Subject to the regulations, a compliance officer may exercise the powers conferred and shall perform the duties imposed on a compliance officer under this Act.

***Highway Traffic Act*, s. 33**

(3) A compliance officer is deemed to be an officer appointed for carrying out the provisions of the *Highway Traffic Act* for the purposes of section 33 of that Act while the compliance officer is on land owned, leased, used or occupied by the Corporation.

Identification

(4) A compliance officer shall, on request, produce evidence of their appointment while carrying out an activity under this section.

Power to require response to inquiries

32 (1) For the purposes of determining if a person is in compliance with this Act, the regulations or the by-laws, a compliance officer may, at any reasonable time and with any reasonable assistance, require the person, or any person employed by or providing services to the person, to respond to reasonable inquiries.

Same

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), a compliance officer may make inquiries by any means of communication.

Production of document

(3) In requiring a person to respond to an inquiry under subsection (1), a compliance officer may require the production of any document or data, in any form, required to be kept under this Act and any other document or data, in any form, related to the purpose of the inquiry.

Documents, data in electronic form

(4) If a document or data is kept in electronic form, a compliance officer may require that a copy of it be provided either on paper or electronically, or both.

Obstruction

33 (1) No person shall hinder or obstruct any compliance officer in the performance of their duties under this Act, the regulations or the by-laws.

False information

(2) No person shall orally, in writing or electronically give or submit false or misleading information in any statement, document or data to any compliance officer in respect of any matter related to this Act, the regulations or the by-laws.

Same

(3) No person shall include false or misleading information in any document or data required to be created, stored or submitted under this Act, the regulations or the by-laws.

Refusal to provide information

(4) No person shall refuse to provide any compliance officer with information required for the purposes of this Act, the regulations or the by-laws.

ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES

Purpose

34 An administrative penalty imposed under this Part is intended to promote compliance with this Act and the regulations and is not punitive.

Authority to issue penalty

35 (1) A compliance officer may, by order, require a person to pay an administrative penalty if the officer is satisfied that the person has contravened or failed to comply with a prescribed provision of this Act or a regulation.

Contents

(2) An administrative penalty order shall include the following information:

1. A description of the contravention.
2. The amount of the penalty.
3. The date by which payment is required.
4. Information respecting review rights.
5. Any other prescribed information.

Limitation period

36 An administrative penalty order may be issued only within the prescribed period.

No right to be heard

37 There is no right to be heard before an order imposing an administrative penalty is made.

Amount of penalty

38 (1) The amount of an administrative penalty shall be the amount set out in the regulations or otherwise determined in accordance with the regulations.

To whom payable

(2) An administrative penalty is payable to the Corporation.

Review

39 (1) A person who is subject to an order imposing an administrative penalty may, in accordance with the regulations, request a review of the order by a prescribed individual.

Stay

(2) A review under subsection (1) stays the order until the matter is finally disposed of.

Powers on review

(3) After conducting the review under subsection (1) in accordance with the regulations, if any, the prescribed individual may,

(a) find that the person did not contravene the provision of this Act or the regulations specified in the order imposing the administrative penalty and rescind the order imposing the administrative penalty;

(b) find that the person did contravene the provision of this Act or the regulations specified in the order imposing the administrative penalty and affirm the order imposing the administrative penalty; or

(c) find that the person did contravene the provision of this Act or the regulations specified in the order imposing the administrative penalty but that the penalty is excessive in the circumstances or is, by its magnitude, punitive in nature having regard to all the circumstances, and in that case the prescribed individual shall amend the order imposing the administrative penalty by reducing the amount of the penalty.

Written decision

(4) A review decision under subsection (3) shall be in writing and shall set out the prescribed individual's findings and reasons.

Payment after review

(5) If the prescribed individual finds under clause (3) (b) or (c) that the person contravened the provision of this Act or the regulations specified in the order, the person shall pay the administrative penalty by the later of,

(a) 30 days after the day the review decision is made; and

(b) the date specified in the review decision, if any.

Administrative penalty and other measures

40 An administrative penalty may be imposed alone or in conjunction with any other regulatory measure provided by this or any other Act.

Collection and enforcement

41 (1) If an administrative penalty is not paid by the date specified in the order imposing it or by the date referred to in subsection 39 (5), if applicable, the Corporation may file the order with the Superior Court of Justice.

Same

(2) Upon being filed, the order may be enforced as if it were an order of the court.

Same

(3) For the purpose of section 129 of the *Courts of Justice Act*, the date on which the order is filed is deemed to be the date of the order.

Debt due to the Corporation

42 An administrative penalty that is not paid in accordance with the order imposing it is a debt due to the Corporation and may be recovered as such.

OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

Offences

43 (1) A person is guilty of an offence if the person contravenes section 33 or any prescribed provision of the regulations.

Attempts

(2) A person who attempts to do anything that would be an offence under this Act is guilty of that offence.

Penalties

44 A person convicted of an offence under this Act is liable to a fine of not less than $100 and not more than $5,000.

Vehicle owner may be convicted

45 Subject to the regulations, the owner of a vehicle may be charged with and convicted of an offence under this Act for which the driver of the vehicle is subject to be charged unless, at the time of the offence, the vehicle was in the possession of some person other than the owner without the owner's consent and on conviction the owner is liable to the penalty prescribed for the offence.

Offence committed during journey, where proceeding may be heard

46 (1) Despite section 29 of the *Provincial Offences Act*, if an offence under this Act is committed in or on a vehicle in the course of a journey, the offence is deemed to have been committed in any county or district through which the vehicle passed during the journey.

Same

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), if the vehicle passed through or along the boundary of two or more counties or districts in the course of the journey, the offence is deemed to have been committed in any of those counties or districts.

Limitation period for prosecutions

47 A prosecution for an offence under this Act shall not be commenced more than two years after the offence first came to the attention of the Corporation.

PART VIII
GENERAL

Service

48 An administrative penalty order issued under subsection 35 (1) and any other prescribed document given under this Act shall be served,

(a) personally;

(b) by mail addressed to the person to whom it is directed at the person's last known address; or

(c) in accordance with the regulations, if any.

Crown liability

No personal liability

49 (1) No cause of action arises against any current or former member of the Executive Council or employee or agent of the Crown for any act done in good faith in the exercise or performance, or intended exercise or performance, of the person's powers, duties or functions under this Act or for any alleged neglect, default or other omission in the exercise or performance in good faith of those powers, duties or functions.

Crown remains vicariously liable

(2) Despite subsection 8 (3) of the *Crown Liability and Proceedings Act, 2019*, subsection (1) does not relieve the Crown of liability to which it would otherwise be subject as a result of the acts or omissions of a person specified in subsection (1).

No liability for acts or omissions of others

(3) No cause of action arises against the Crown or any person specified in subsection (1) for an act or omission of a person other than the Crown or a person specified in that subsection, if the act or omission is related, directly or indirectly, to the exercise or performance, or intended exercise or performance, of a power, duty or function under this Act.

Employment, etc. with Corporation or a subsidiary

(4) If a person who is an employee or agent of the Crown is employed in or assigned to or otherwise performs duties directly for the Corporation or a subsidiary of the Corporation, the person is deemed to be an employee of the Corporation or the subsidiary and not an employee or agent of the Crown specified in subsection (1) in relation to the person's acts or omissions arising from the employment, assignment or performance for the purposes of this section and sections 50 and 51 as well as any claim for vicarious liability.

Proceedings by Crown not prevented

(5) This section does not apply with respect to proceedings brought by the Crown.

Liability of Corporation or a subsidiary

No personal liability

50 (1) No cause of action arises against any current or former director, commissioner, officer or employee of the Corporation or a subsidiary of the Corporation for any act done in good faith in the exercise or performance, or intended exercise or performance, of the person's powers, duties or functions under this Act or for any alleged neglect, default or other omission in the exercise or performance in good faith of those powers, duties or functions.

Same

(2) For greater certainty, the duties and functions referred to in subsection (1) include the duty to comply with a directive of the Minister, the Minister of Finance, the Management Board of Cabinet or the Lieutenant Governor in Council and the function of carrying out any such directive.

Vicarious liability of Corporation or a subsidiary

(3) Subsection (1) does not relieve the Corporation or a subsidiary of the Corporation of liability to which it would otherwise be subject as a result of the acts or omissions of a person specified in subsection (1).

Proceedings by Crown not prevented

(4) This section does not apply with respect to proceedings brought by the Crown.

Proceedings barred

51 (1) No proceeding shall be commenced,

(a) against any person specified in subsection 49 (1) in respect of a matter referred to in that subsection;

(b) against the Crown or any person specified in subsection 49 (1) in respect of a matter referred to in subsection 49 (3); or

(c) against any person specified in subsection 50 (1) in respect of a matter referred to in that subsection.

Same

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply with respect to an application for judicial review or a claim for constitutional remedy but does apply with respect to any other court, administrative or arbitral proceeding claiming any remedy or relief, including specific performance, an injunction, declaratory relief, a remedy in contract, restitution, unjust enrichment or tort, a remedy for breach of trust or fiduciary obligation or any equitable remedy, enforcement of a judgment, order or award made outside Ontario or any form of compensation or damages including loss of revenue or profit.

Proceedings by Crown not prevented

(3) This section does not apply with respect to proceedings brought by the Crown.

PART IX
TRANSITION

Board members

52 (1) An individual who is a commissioner immediately before the day this section comes into force becomes a director on that day and may continue as a director for the remainder of their term.

Remuneration

(2) Subject to section 10, a person who is a director under subsection (1) of this section is entitled to the same remuneration to which that person was entitled as a commissioner immediately before the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act* was repealed.

Chair and vice chair

(3) An individual who was designated as the chair or the vice-chair under the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act*, as it read immediately before its repeal, may continue as the chair or vice-chair of the board, respectively, until a new chair or vice-chair is designated under this Act.

Chief executive officer

(4) The individual who was appointed as the chief executive officer under the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act*, as it read immediately before its repeal, may continue as the chief executive officer of the Corporation until a new chief executive officer is appointed under this Act.

Definition

(5) In this section,

"commissioner" means a member of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission appointed under subsection 2 (2) of the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act*, as that subsection read immediately before its repeal.

Continuation of by-laws

53 (1) Despite the repeal of the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act*, any by-law made by the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission that is in effect immediately before the repeal is continued until amended or revoked under this Act.

Tolls and fares

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), a regulation made under subsection 13 (3) of the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act*, as that subsection read immediately before its repeal, is deemed to be a by-law.

Legacy activities

54 (1) The Corporation may continue to engage in an activity that it was authorized to engage in under the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act*, as it read immediately before its repeal, even if the activity is not within, or ancillary to, the objects of the Corporation set out in section 4, provided that the activity is carried out in a manner that is not inconsistent with those objects.

Exception

(2) Subsection (1) does not authorize the Corporation to engage in an activity if,

(a) the Corporation has not engaged in the activity during the 10-year period preceding the day on which the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act* was repealed;

(b) there is no authority for the activity other than section 19 or 20 of *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act*, as those provisions read immediately before their repeal; or

(c) the Minister has directed the Corporation to cease engaging in the activity under subsection (5).

Minister may approve activity

(3) Despite clause (2) (a), the Corporation may engage in an activity described in that clause if the Minister approves the activity in writing.

Additional information

(4) The Minister may, at any time, request information respecting an activity described in subsection (1) or (3) and the Corporation shall provide the information within the time specified by the Minister, if any.

Minister's directives

(5) The Minister may issue directives to the Corporation respecting an activity referred to in subsection (1) or (3), including a directive to cease engaging in the activity and the Corporation shall comply with the directive within the time specified by the Minister, if any.

Legacy directives

55 (1) Any directive issued under the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act* that was in effect immediately before the repeal of that Act continues to apply to the Corporation.

Same

(2) For greater certainty, a directive referred to in subsection (1) may be modified or revoked by a Minister's directive issued under this Act.

Former name

56 Any usage of the name Ontario Northland Transportation Commission or Commission de transport Ontario Northland on any document or sign is deemed to be a reference to Ontario Northland Transportation Corporation and a document or sign is not invalid or ineffective by reason only that it uses such name.

PART X
REGULATIONS

Regulations

Lieutenant Governor in Council

57 (1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations respecting any matter necessary or advisable to effectively carry out the intent and purposes of this Act and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may make regulations,

(a) governing anything referred to as being prescribed or anything that is required or permitted to be done in accordance with the regulations or otherwise as provided by the regulations, other than by the Minister;

(b) defining "subsidiary" for the purposes of this Act, including defining it differently for different provisions of this Act;

(c) respecting the conduct of persons using or seeking to use an ONTC transportation service;

(d) respecting the use of, or presence in or on,

(i) any transportation infrastructure owned or operated by the Corporation,

(ii) any property that is or may be used in connection with transportation infrastructure owned or operated by the Corporation, or

(iii) any property that is or may be used in connection with an ONTC transportation service;

(e) respecting conduct that may obstruct or interfere with,

(i) the use or operation of an ONTC transportation service,

(ii) the use or operation of transportation infrastructure owned or operated by the Corporation, or

(iii) the performance by a compliance officer of their duties or the exercise of their powers;

(f) governing administrative penalties for the purposes of Part VII;

(g) governing procedures for making and serving orders and other documents under this Act, including prescribing rules for service, prescribing the day on which an order or other document is deemed to have been received, providing that service of an order or other document on one person may be effective as service on another person and providing for service on persons outside Ontario;

(h) providing for exemptions from this Act or any of its provisions, or that a provision of this Act does not apply, and prescribing circumstances and conditions for any such exemption or non-application;

(i) governing such transitional matters as the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers necessary or advisable to facilitate the implementation of this Act or to deal with any problems or issues arising as a result of the enactment or application of this Act.

Minister

(2) The Minister may make regulations specifying a matter for the purposes of subsection 7 (3).

Administrative penalties

(3) Clause (1) (f) may include regulations,

(a) prescribing the amount of a penalty, or a method for calculating the amount, and prescribing different penalties or ranges of penalties for different types of contraventions or failures to comply and different penalties or ranges of penalties depending on specified criteria;

(b) authorizing higher penalties for a second or subsequent contravention or failure to comply;

(c) governing the review of an administrative penalty order under section 39.

PART XI
CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS

Mining Act

58 Subsection 29 (3) of the *Mining Act* is amended by striking out "Commission" wherever it appears and substituting in each case "Corporation".

PART XII
REPEAL, COMMENCEMENT AND SHORT TITLE

Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act

59 The *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act* is repealed.

Commencement

60 The Act set out in this Schedule comes into force on a day to be named by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Short title

61 The short title of the Act set out in this Schedule is the *Ontario Northland Transportation Corporation Act, 2026*.

SCHEDULE 7
PUBLIC LANDS ACT

1 Section 1 of the *Public Lands Act* is amended by adding the following definition:

"justice" has the same meaning as in the *Provincial Offences Act*; ("juge")

2 Subsection 5 (4) of the Act is amended by adding "this Act or" after "issued under".

3 The Act is amended by adding the following section:

Occupying public lands

23.1 (1) No person shall occupy public lands without authorization.

Rehabilitation

(2) If a person is found guilty under section 70.3 of contravening subsection (1), the person shall,

(a) restore the lands to a clean and safe condition and, to the extent possible, to the condition the lands were in before the occupation; and

(b) remove and decommission any building, structure or thing related to the occupation.

4 The Act is amended by adding the following section:

Blocked access

26.1 (1) No person shall park a conveyance, or place or leave unattended a conveyance, structure or other thing, including erecting a fence, in a location where to do so would hinder or block access to public lands.

Officer may move

(2) If an officer finds a conveyance parked, or a conveyance, structure or other thing placed or left, in contravention of subsection (1), they may move it to and store it in a suitable place or cause it to be so moved or stored.

Officer, Crown not liable

(3) No action or other proceeding shall be commenced and no order shall be made against an officer, the Crown or an employee or agent of the Crown for any act, neglect, default or omission taken or made, or damage caused, in the enforcement of this section.

Recovery of reasonable costs

(4) The reasonable costs of moving and placement or storage of a conveyance, structure or other thing under subsection (2) may be recovered as a debt due to the Crown from the person who contravened subsection (1).

5 Subsection 50 (1) of the Act is amended by adding "including in connection with a permit issued to a person to travel on a closed road" at the end.

6 (1) Subsection 52 (1) of the Act is amended by striking out "The district manager of the administrative district of the Ministry in which a road is situate may, in his or her discretion and for any periods that he or she determines" at the beginning and substituting "The district manager of the administrative district of the Ministry in which a road is situate, or the district manager's delegate, may, in their discretion and for any periods that they determine".

(2) Subsection 52 (4) of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

Application for permit

(4) Despite the closure of a road under this section, a person may apply, in accordance with the regulations, for a permit to travel on the road.

District manager's powers

(4.1) In response to an application made under subsection (4), the district manager or their delegate may,

(a) issue the permit subject to any terms and conditions they consider advisable; or

(b) refuse to issue the permit.

Permit issuance

(4.2) Subject to subsection (4.3), if the district manager or their delegate has not issued a permit or notified an applicant of their decision to refuse to issue a permit within the prescribed period after receiving an application made under subsection (4), the Ministry shall issue the permit subject to any prescribed terms and conditions.

Exceptions

(4.3) Subsection (4.2) does not apply with respect to an application in any of the following circumstances:

1. The applicant is a prescribed person or belongs to a prescribed class of persons.
2. The application is in respect of a prescribed road, prescribed class of road or prescribed part of a road.
3. Before the prescribed period expires, the Ministry has provided notice in writing to the applicant that subsection (4.2) does not apply with respect to the application.
4. Any prescribed circumstances.

Holder of permit to comply with terms, conditions

(4.4) The holder of a permit shall comply with the terms and conditions to which the permit is subject.

Cancellation

(4.5) The district manager or their delegate may cancel a permit in accordance with the regulations, if any.

(3) Subsection 52 (7) of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

Regulations

(7) The Minister may make regulations,

(a) prescribing and governing actions provided for in clause (2) (d);

(b) governing permits issued under clause (4.1) (a) and subsection (4.2);

(c) respecting anything that this section requires, permits or authorizes to be prescribed or to be done by or in accordance with the regulations.

7 (1) Section 58 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

Same

(3.1) A reservation of all timber and trees or any class or kind of tree contained in letters patent dated after the 1st day of April, 1869 and granting a freehold interest in public lands disposed of under this or any other Act is void.

(2) Section 58 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

Exceptions

(5) Subsections (1) to (3.1) do not apply where,

(a) the reserved trees and timber have been alienated or disposed of by the Crown in right of Ontario to a person other than the patentee;

(b) the administration and control of the reserved trees or timber has been transferred to the Crown in right of Canada or an agent corporation within the meaning of Part X of the *Financial Administration Act* (Canada); or

(c) the reserved trees or timber have reverted or may hereafter revert to the Crown in right of Ontario through abandonment, cancellation, forfeiture or otherwise.

(3) Subsection 58 (6) of the Act is amended by adding "and the reservation is not void" after "timber licence".

8 (1) Subsection 61 (1) of the Act is amended by adding "on or" before "before".

(2) Clause 61 (2) (a) of the Act is amended by adding "or" at the end.

9 Part III of the Act is amended by adding the following section:

Adoption by reference

69.4 (1) A regulation may adopt by reference, in whole or in part, with such changes as the Lieutenant Governor in Council or the Minister, as the case may be, considers necessary, any document and may require compliance with the document.

Rolling incorporation by reference

(2) The power to adopt by reference and require compliance with a document in subsection (1) includes the power to adopt a document as it may be amended from time to time.

10 Part III.1 of the Act is amended by adding the following section:

Inspection of places

69.5 (1) For the purposes of this Act or the regulations, an officer may enter onto or cross over any private or public land and inspect any building, conveyance, equipment, machinery, structure or other thing that the officer believes on reasonable grounds relates to any thing to which this Act or the regulations apply.

Powers during inspection

(2) During the inspection, the officer may,

(a) require the production of any thing that is or may be relevant to the inspection;

(b) require the production of and inspect any document that is required to be kept under this Act;

(c) make reasonable inquiries of any person with respect to anything relevant to the inspection;

(d) require that any conveyance, equipment, machinery or other thing be operated, used, moved or set in motion under conditions specified by the officer;

(e) use or require the use of any equipment, machinery or other thing in order to carry out the inspection, including the use of any computer system to examine data contained in or available to the computer system for the purpose of examining information relevant to the inspection, and of any copying equipment to make copies of information that is relevant to the inspection;

(f) use or require the use of a computer system for the purposes of,

(i) producing a readable record from the computer system or other data storage, processing or retrieval device belonging to or used by a person who is required to produce any records under this section, or

(ii) examining information relevant to the inspection, including the computer hardware or software, or other data storage, processing or retrieval device;

(g) if an officer is unable to produce or receive a readable record from a computer system or other data storage, processing or retrieval device under clause (f) for the purpose of examining information relevant to the inspection, and after giving a receipt,

(i) remove any computer hardware, software and any other data storage, processing or retrieval device,

(ii) produce or require the production of that record within a reasonable period, and

(iii) promptly return the computer hardware, software and any other data storage, processing or retrieval device to,

(A) the place from which they were removed, or

(B) any other place that may be agreed to by the officer and the person from whom they were taken;

(h) take measurements that are relevant to the inspection;

(i) record observations that are relevant to the inspection;

(j) take any photographic, audio or video records that are relevant to the inspection;

(k) inspect any other thing that is in the building or other place being inspected; and

(l) conduct any tests that may be relevant to the inspection.

Provision of information

(3) A person shall, during the inspection, provide information requested by the officer that is relevant to the inspection.

Obligation to assist

(4) If an officer makes a demand for any thing under subsection (2), the person having custody of the thing shall produce it to the officer and, at the request of the officer, shall provide whatever assistance is reasonably necessary, including using any data storage, processing or retrieval device or system available to produce a record in a readable form if the demand is for a document.

Identification

(5) An officer who is acting under this section shall produce identification on request.

Entry to dwellings

(6) Subsection (1) does not apply to a building or part of a building that is being used as a dwelling.

Assistance

(7) An officer may be accompanied or assisted by any person during an inspection under this section.

Warrant for dwelling

(8) On application without notice, a justice may issue a warrant authorizing an officer to enter a dwelling if the justice is satisfied, by information given under oath or affirmation, that,

(a) the officer is entering the dwelling to conduct an inspection for the purposes of this Act or the regulations; and

(b) entry to the dwelling has been refused or there are reasonable grounds to believe that entry will be refused.

Same, application for warrant

(9) An application under subsection (8) shall specify that the warrant is to enter and inspect a building or part of a building that is being used as a dwelling.

Conditions in warrant

(10) A warrant granted under this section is subject to any conditions specified in the warrant.

Duration

(11) A warrant issued under subsection (8) is valid for 30 days or for such shorter period as may be specified in it.

Time of entry

(12) An entry under this section shall be made at a time that is reasonable in view of the activity that is conducted in the building or other place.

Copies

(13) An officer may make copies of any documents inspected or produced during the inspection.

Removal

(14) An officer may remove any documents or other things for the purpose of making copies or for further inspection.

Same

(15) The copying or further inspection referred to in subsection (14) shall be carried out within a reasonable period and the documents or other things shall be returned promptly to the person from whom they were taken.

11 The Act is amended by adding the following sections:

Investigative warrants

70.0.1 (1) On application without notice, a justice may issue a warrant authorizing an officer or any other person specified in the warrant to use any investigative technique or procedure or to do anything described in the warrant if the justice is satisfied by information under oath that,

(a) there are reasonable grounds to believe that an offence under this Act has been or is being committed; and

(b) evidence concerning the offence will be obtained through the use of the technique or procedure or the doing of the thing.

Power to enter, etc.

(2) The warrant may authorize the person specified in it to enter and search the building or other place for which the warrant is issued and, without limiting the powers of the justice under subsection (1), the warrant may authorize the person specified in it to use any investigative technique or procedure or to do anything described in the warrant that may be relevant to the search.

Private land

(3) The warrant may authorize the person specified in it to enter onto or cross over private land, including shore lands, to search for evidence of property boundaries.

Duration

(4) The warrant is valid for 30 days or for whatever shorter period is specified in it.

Further warrants

(5) A justice may issue further warrants under subsection (1).

Production orders

70.0.2 (1) On application without notice and subject to subsection (3), a justice may issue an order to a person other than a person under investigation for an offence requiring the person to,

(a) produce documents or copies of documents, certified by affidavit to be true copies;

(b) produce data; or

(c) prepare a document based on documents or data already in existence and produce it.

Same

(2) An order under subsection (1) shall require that the document or data be produced to an officer named in the order within the time, at the place and in the form specified in the order.

Grounds for order

(3) A justice may make an order under subsection (1) if they are satisfied by information given under oath or affirmation that there are reasonable grounds to believe that,

(a) an offence under this Act has been or is being committed;

(b) the document or data will provide evidence respecting the offence or suspected offence; and

(c) the person who is subject to the order has possession or control of the document or data.

Conditions

(4) An order under subsection (1) may contain such conditions as the justice considers advisable.

No return of copies

(5) Copies of documents produced under this section are not required to be returned to the person who provided them.

Evidence

(6) A copy of a document produced under this section, on proof by affidavit that it is a true copy, is admissible in evidence in any prosecution of a person for an offence under this Act and has the same probative force as the original document would have if it had been proved in the ordinary way.

Seizure and forfeiture

70.0.3 (1) An officer who is lawfully in a building or other place may, without a warrant, seize any thing that they have reasonable grounds to believe has been used in the commission of an offence under this Act.

Presence under warrant

(2) If the officer is in the building or other place under a warrant, subsection (1) applies to any thing, whether or not it is specified in the warrant.

Safekeeping

(3) An officer shall deliver any thing that they seize to a person authorized by the Minister for safekeeping.

Leaving with occupant

(4) Despite subsection (3), an officer may leave a thing that they seize in the custody of the occupant of the building or other place in which it was seized.

Occupant to safeguard

(5) If any thing is left in the custody of an occupant under subsection (4), the occupant shall safeguard the thing until,

(a) an officer removes the thing;

(b) the occupant is notified by an officer that the investigation has concluded and that a charge will not be laid; or

(c) if a charge is laid, the defendant is acquitted or the charge is dismissed, withdrawn or is finally disposed of.

Thing taken before justice

(6) Subsections (3) and (4) do not apply to a thing that is required to be carried before a justice by a search warrant issued under Part VIII of the *Provincial Offences Act*.

Return of seized things

(7) Any thing seized and not forfeited under this section shall be returned to the person from whom it was seized if,

(a) a charge is not laid at the conclusion of the investigation; or

(b) a charge is laid but, when the charge is finally disposed of, the defendant is acquitted or the charge is dismissed or withdrawn.

Payment of fine

(8) If a person is convicted of an offence and a fine is imposed,

(a) a thing seized in connection with the offence and not forfeited to the Crown in right of Ontario under this section shall not be returned until the fine has been paid; and

(b) if payment of the fine is in default within the meaning of section 69 of the *Provincial Offences Act*, a justice may order that the thing be forfeited to the Crown in right of Ontario.

Forfeiture if identity unknown

(9) If the identity of the person from whom a thing was seized has not been ascertained within 30 days after the seizure, the thing is forfeited to the Crown in right of Ontario.

Disposition of forfeited thing

(10) A thing forfeited to the Crown in right of Ontario shall be disposed of in accordance with the directions of the Minister.

Application by person with interest

(11) If a thing is forfeited to the Crown in right of Ontario following a conviction under this Act, a person who claims an interest in the thing and who is not the person from whom the thing was seized or the person who was convicted may apply to a justice, not later than 30 days after the thing is forfeited, on notice to the Minister and to the person from whom the thing was seized, for an order directing that the thing be released to the person claiming the interest.

Conditions

(12) An order made under subsection (11) is subject to such conditions as may be imposed by the justice.

12 (1) Clause 70.3 (2) (a) of the Act is amended by,

(a) striking out "$15,000" and substituting "$100,000"; and

(b) striking out "$1,000" and substituting "$10,000".

(2) Clause 70.3 (2) (b) of the Act is amended by,

(a) striking out "$25,000" and substituting "$200,000"; and

(b) striking out "$1,000" and substituting "$10,000".

(3) Clause 70.3 (3) (a) of the Act is amended by,

(a) striking out "$25,000" and substituting "$500,000"; and

(b) striking out "$1,000" and substituting "$20,000".

(4) Clause 70.3 (3) (b) of the Act is amended by,

(a) striking out "$50,000" and substituting "$1,000,000"; and

(b) striking out "$1,000" and substituting "$20,000".

(5) Section 70.3 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

Offence re contravening order

(5.1) Any person who contravenes an order described in clause (5) (b) or (c) is guilty of an offence.

13 The Act is amended by adding the following sections:

Conveyance owner may be convicted

70.3.1 (1) The owner of a conveyance may be charged with and convicted of an offence for which the operator of the conveyance is subject to be charged under this Act or the regulations.

Exception, possession of conveyance without consent

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply where, at the time of the offence, the conveyance was in the possession of a person other than the owner without the owner's consent, the burden of proof of which is on the owner.

Deemed ownership of plate, etc., holder

(3) For the purposes of this section, where a number plate issued under the *Highway Traffic Act* or the *Off-Road Vehicles Act* or a registration number issued under the *Motorized Snow Vehicles Act* is exposed on the conveyance, or the conveyance is registered under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*, the holder of the permit or licence corresponding to the number plate or registration number shall be deemed the owner of the conveyance.

Exception, possession without consent

(4) Subsection (3) does not apply where, at the time of the offence, the number plate or registration number was exposed on the conveyance without the consent of the holder of the permit, the burden of proof of which is on the holder of the permit.

Administrative penalties

Purpose

70.3.2 (1) The purpose of an administrative penalty imposed under this section is to promote compliance with this Act and the regulations.

Order imposing administrative penalties

(2) If a prescribed person is satisfied that a person is contravening or not complying with a prescribed provision of this Act or the regulations, the prescribed person may, by order, impose an administrative penalty on the person in accordance with this section and the regulations.

Content of order

(3) An order imposing an administrative penalty shall be in writing and shall include the following information:

1. The particulars of the contravention of this Act or the regulations.
2. The date and time by which payment of the administrative penalty must be made.
3. The amount payable and how payment of the administrative penalty may be made.
4. The right to request a review of the administrative penalty order.
5. Any prescribed information.

Amount of administrative penalty

(4) The amounts for administrative penalties shall be determined in accordance with the regulations and shall not exceed $25,000 for an individual or $50,000 for a corporation.

Administrative penalty may be imposed with other measures

(5) An administrative penalty may be imposed alone or in conjunction with any other regulatory measure provided by this or any other Act.

Limitation

(6) An administrative penalty shall not be imposed more than five years after the day the contravention first came to the knowledge of an officer.

Deadline to pay penalty

(7) A person who receives an order imposing an administrative penalty shall, subject to any stays of the order described in subsection (11), pay the penalty,

(a) no later than 60 days after the day the order is served if the person is an individual; or

(b) no later than 30 days after the day the order is served if the person is a corporation.

No right to be heard

(8) There is no right to be heard before an order imposing an administrative penalty is made.

Review

(9) A person who has received an order imposing an administrative penalty may submit a request for a review of the order to a person prescribed for the purposes of this subsection no later than 30 days after the day the order is served.

If review requested

(10) If a person who has received an order imposing an administrative penalty requests a review under subsection (9), the person prescribed for the purposes of subsection (9) shall conduct the review in accordance with any prescribed requirements.

Stay of order

(11) A request for a review under subsection (9) operates as a stay of the order until the matter is finally disposed of.

Decision

(12) After conducting the review, the person prescribed for the purposes of subsection (9) may,

(a) find that the person did not contravene the provision of this Act or the regulations specified in the order imposing the administrative penalty and rescind the order; or

(b) find that the person did contravene the provision of this Act or the regulations specified in the order imposing the administrative penalty and affirm the order.

Decision final

(13) A decision made under subsection (12) is final.

Deadline

(14) If the person prescribed for the purposes of subsection (9) affirms the order under clause (12) (b), they shall set a deadline for payment of the administrative penalty and the person against whom the administrative penalty is imposed shall pay the penalty by that deadline.

Enforcement by court

(15) If an order imposing an administrative penalty is issued under this section and not rescinded under clause (12) (a) and the penalty is not paid by the applicable deadline, the order imposing the administrative penalty may be filed in the Superior Court of Justice and then may be enforced as if it were an order of that court.

Post judgment interest

(16) Section 129 of the *Courts of Justice Act* applies in respect of an order filed in the Superior Court of Justice under subsection (15) of this section and the date on which the order is filed under subsection (15) of this section is deemed to be the date of the order that is referred to in section 129 of the *Courts of Justice Act*.

Crown debt

(17) An administrative penalty imposed under this section that is not paid by the applicable deadline is a debt due to the Crown and the Crown may recover the debt by action or by any other remedy or procedure available by law to the Crown for the collection of debts owed to the Crown.

Regulations

(18) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations governing administrative penalties under this section, including respecting anything that this section requires, permits or authorizes to be prescribed or to be done by or in accordance with the regulations.

14 Section 70.4 of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

Limitation period

70.4 (1) A prosecution for an offence under this Act shall not be commenced more than five years after the day evidence of the offence first came to the attention of an officer.

Transition

(2) This section, as it read before the day section 14 of Schedule 7 to the *Protect Ontario's Northern and Rural Communities Act, 2026* came into force, continues to apply with respect to an offence the evidence of which first came to the attention of an officer before that day.

Commencement

15 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, this Schedule comes into force on the day the *Protect Ontario's Northern and Rural Communities Act, 2026* receives Royal Assent.

(2) Sections 5 and 6 come into force on a day to be named by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

SCHEDULE 8
RESPECTING RURAL ONTARIO ACT, 2026

CONTENTS

1. Definition
2. Programs
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Definition

1 In this Act,

"Minister" means the Minister of Rural Affairs or such other member of the Executive Council to whom responsibility for the administration of this Act is assigned or transferred under the *Executive Council Act*.

Programs

2 (1) The Minister may establish and maintain programs in respect of rural economic development and may alter or discontinue the programs as the Minister considers necessary or appropriate.

Rural Ontario Development Program

(2) Despite the *Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act*, the Rural Ontario Development Program is deemed to be a program established by the Minister under subsection (1).

Advisory bodies

3 (1) The Minister may establish and maintain advisory bodies that advise the Minister and perform such other functions as may be specified by the Minister.

Same

(2) The Minister may appoint members to an advisory body and provide the members' terms of service.

Panel continued

4 (1) The Rural Economic Development Advisory Panel, established pursuant to Order in Council 202/2011, is continued as an advisory body named the Rural Ontario Advisory Panel.

Mandate

(2) The mandate of the Rural Ontario Advisory Panel is to,

(a) provide advice and recommendations to the Minister with respect to rural economic development programs; and

(b) perform such other functions as the Minister may specify.

Members to be appointed by Minister

(3) The Rural Ontario Advisory Panel shall consist of up to 14 members all of whom shall be appointed by the Minister.

Terms of service

(4) The Minister may provide the members' terms of service.

Chair

(5) The Minister may designate one of the members as chair and up to two of the members as vice-chairs.

Transition

(6) A person who was a member of the Rural Economic Development Advisory Panel on the day this section came into force shall continue to be a member of the Rural Ontario Advisory Panel until their appointment expires or is revoked by the Minister.

Same

(7) A person who was chair or vice-chair of the Rural Economic Development Advisory Panel on the day this section came into force shall continue in that role on the Rural Ontario Advisory Panel until their term expires or the Minister designates a different chair or vice-chair.

Rural Ontario Week

5 (1) Subject to subsection (2), the third full week in September in each year is proclaimed as Rural Ontario Week to celebrate and raise awareness of rural Ontario's contributions to the Province's economy and identity.

Minister may declare a different week

(2) For any particular year, the Minister may declare that Rural Ontario Week is any other week of the year.

Commencement

6 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the Act set out in this Schedule comes into force on the day the *Protect Ontario's Northern and Rural Communities Act, 2026* receives Royal Assent.

(2) Section 4 comes into force on a day to be named by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Short title

7 The short title of the Act set out in this Schedule is the *Respecting Rural Ontario Act, 2026*.