**Summary of the Passing of Bill 139-The Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017**

Bill 139 is the proposed Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017 which was introduced on May 30, 2017. The Bill proposes to make changes to the Planning Act and introduce new legislation to replace the Ontario Municipal Board Act with the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal Act to give communities a stronger voice in land use planning.

If Bill 139 passes the Legislature and receives Royal Assent, the proposed regulatory changes would update tribunal references from “Ontario Municipal Board” to “Local Planning Appeal Tribunal”, where applicable. They would also require explanations of how planning proposals conform with local planning documents.

On December 12, 2017, the Legislative Assembly passed the “Building Better Communities and Conserving Watershed Act, 2017, which was made in part to replace the Ontario Municipal Board with a new Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, and help ensure that proceedings before the tribunal are fairer, faster and more affordable.

This legislation contains 5 changes that will:

* Reduce the number of appeals by limiting what can be brought to the new tribunal.
* Decrease the length and cost of hearing by introducing timelines and requiring the new tribunal to find ways to settle major land use planning appeals that could potentially avoid the hearing process.
* Eliminate lengthy and often argumentative, cross examinations of witnesses by parties and their lawyers at hearings of major land use planning appeals.
* Establish the Local Planning Appeal Support Centre, which will provide Ontarians with information about the land use planning process, legal and planning advice.
* Give more weight to key decisions made by municipal officials who have been elected to serve in the interests of the communities they represent.

Some changes made through Bill 139 will require corresponding amendments to existing regulations and the creation of new regulations. Under the Planning Act, the proposed regulatory changes would:

* Require explanations of how planning proposals conform with local planning documents
* Clarify requirements for municipal notices
* Make other technical changes
* Establish transition rues for planning matters in process

For more information and to provide comments on this matter please go to the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry:

<https://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTMzOTAx&statusId=MjAzNjcw&language=en>

Proposed amendments to matters included in existing regulations under the Planning Act relating to the Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017 (Bill 139)

<https://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTMzODk5&statusId=MjAzNjY4&language=en> Proposed new regulation under the Planning Act to prescribe transitional provisions for the Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017 (Bill 139)