



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Bill 61: CQDE rejects any relaxation of environmental protection

MONTREAL, June 3, 2020 – The CQDE believes that the government is misguided in allowing the relaxation of environmental rules for the purposes of economic recovery, as stipulated in Bill 61 tabled today.

The CQDE is alarmed at the risk of destruction of natural environments and the possible impacts on species at risk which could result from the implementation of this legislation. At a time when natural environments, particularly wetlands, are already threatened despite their essential role for our ecosystems, Bill 61 will open the door to a system that favours offsetting rather than insisting on the obligation to avoid or minimize destruction.

“We are already in the midst of a climate and ecological crisis. Relaxing the rules and opening the door to the destruction of natural environments is a disservice to the population. An economic recovery based on sound management would instead ensure that every effort is made to avoid or minimize further destruction, before thinking about “offsetting” the disappearance of these environments,” recalls CQDE Executive Director Geneviève Paul.

“Although a post-COVID recovery needs to be initiated, this should not take place under any conditions or at any price. Building a school on a wetland will not be doing us a favour. Problems are not solved by creating new ones, and relaxing environmental laws and regulations would only worsen the situation, as regards both biodiversity and the health of Quebecers,” added Ms. Paul.

Another source of concern is the possibility that a regulation may amend the environmental impact assessment and review procedure. The CQDE recommends that the government refrain from making hasty decisions and ensure that the public is duly

consulted. The organization believes that the population must be further consulted and involved in the development of the recovery plan. In this sense, various sections restricting parliamentary debates or changing the time limits for the publication and entry into force of regulations, including section 4 of Bill 61 which limits to a maximum of one hour the study of decrees adopted under the powers conferred by the legislation, appear in our view to be problematic.

The CQDE believes that rigorous enforcement of our environmental legislation remains one of our best guarantees for a prosperous, inclusive, and green recovery. Our organization has joined forces with hundreds of diverse organizations from across Canada to demand a just recovery based on [six fundamental principles](#).

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Source: [Quebec Environmental Law Centre \(CQDE\)](#)

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