Provincial Authority Advice Record (PAAR)
PAAR Response requested by: October 9, 2026
Eastern Bridge Project – Public Services and Procurement Canada
Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (CIAR) Reference Number: 90709

*IAAC encourages comments to be submitted via the **Submit a Comment** feature available on the project's CIAR page at: https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/90709?culture=en-CA. Letters and forms can be uploaded using this feature. If you have any difficulties submitting this way, please contact IAAC using the information provided for assistance.*

Ministry/Agency: Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks	
Primary Contact Name: Fatima Ahmed	
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Please complete this form.

1. Would your ministry/agency participate in the federal impact assessment process for this project? If so, provide information for the main point of contact.

Yes.

Fatima Ahmed
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2. Will your jurisdiction be undertaking a review and analysis of the project? Would your jurisdiction participate in a cooperative review of the project information?

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' (MECP) review role would be scoped to its regulatory responsibilities, including overseeing any applicable provincial environmental assessment for project components and reviewing applications for any applicable environmental permissions for project components and activities.

MECP is also committed to cooperate with the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada in accordance with the Co-operation Agreement between Ontario and Canada on Environmental and Impact Assessment.

3. Does your ministry/agency have any advice on matters that should be included in the Summary of Issues or if needed, addressed by the proponent in the Detailed Project Description?
   For each issue discussed, provide a concise, plain-language summary that is appropriate for inclusion in the Summary of Issues.

Species Conservation Act Consideration:

Proponents must review the *Species Conservation Act, 2025* (SCA) and its supporting regulations as published on e-laws, and should obtain independent professional scientific, technical, and legal advice to understand how the requirements may apply in their specific circumstances.

The SCA modernizes species protection by allowing proponents to follow a registration-first approach while maintaining strong environmental safeguards. Section 16 of the SCA requires any activity that adversely impacts a protected species and/or its habitat to be registered before proceeding unless the activity is prescribed as one that requires a permit or is excepted from the requirement to register or obtain a permit.

The Registrable Activities Regulation (O. Reg. 75/26) sets out the procedure and rules for registering registrable activities and the rules that must be followed when engaging in the registrable activity. A registrable activity may not proceed until a registration has been completed through the Species Conservation Registry and in accordance with the registration requirements outlined in the regulation.

Any activity that may adversely impact a protected species and/or damage or destroy its habitat must be carefully assessed in its specific context and factual circumstances. For this reason, we cannot provide any activity specific direction. Proponents are expected to attain professional scientific and technical advice to ensure compliance with the requirements of the SCA. It is also recommended that proponents obtain appropriate legal advice.

Timing Windows:

MECP acknowledges that appropriate timing windows will be considered when developing mitigation measures for project activities that may impact protected species and/or their habitats, including in-water works, tree clearing, and construction. Please note that conducting activities outside of sensitive time periods may not fully avoid adverse effects on protected species.

To assist in project planning and scheduling, consideration may be given to the timing windows outlined below. Although these timing windows may not capture annual variation, they are based on the best available science for several of the species protected under the SCA identified in the Initial Project Description:

- **SCA-protected Bats**
  - Eastern Red Bat, Hoary Bat, and Silver-haired Bat: active summer roosting period from **April 1 to November 30**.
  - Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, and Tri-coloured Bat: active summer roosting period from **April 1 to October 31**.
  - Eastern Small-footed Myotis: active summer roosting period from **March 15 to November 30**.

- **SCA-protected Fishes**:

- Lake Sturgeon: spawning **May 1 to June 30**.
- American Eel: overwintering **November 1 to March 15**.

- **Blanding's Turtle**:
  - Active period: **April 1 to October 31**.
  - Overwintering period: **November 1 to March 31**.

Habitat Guidance:

To aid project planning and implementation, you may wish to consider how habitat is defined in subsection 2(1) the SCA. Note that the information provided here is general in nature and is not intended to constitute scientific, technical, or legal advice.

Under the SCA, "habitat" for animals and vascular plants is defined as:

- Animals: a **dwelling place**, such as a den, nest or other similar place, that is occupied or habitually occupied by one or more members of a species for the purposes of breeding, rearing, staging, wintering or hibernating, *and* the **area immediately around dwelling place** described above that is essential for the purposes set out above.
- Vascular Plants: the critical root zone surrounding a member of the species.
  - Please note that the best available information suggests that the critical root zone for trees and shrubs (such as Black Ash and Butternut) is generally calculated as the radial distance from the stem equal to 18 times the species reported maximum diameter at breast height (DBH) in Ontario or a jurisdiction with comparable growing conditions, rounded up to the nearest metre.
- All other species: an area on which any member of the species directly depends in order to carry out its life processes

Additionally, MECP notes that page 163 of the Initial Project Description identifies potential snag trees that may provide bat roosting habitat based on characteristics such as peeling bark, cavities, and fissures. While these features are important indicators of suitable habitat for tree-roosting species such as Little Brown Myotis and Northern Myotis, you may wish to consider habitat suitability for foliage-roosting species, including Eastern Red Bat and Hoary Bat, which may occur within the study area.

4. Does your ministry/agency have any advice on matters to consider for inclusion in the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines, should an impact assessment be required?

5. Do you have any comments about the project in relation to effects within federal jurisdiction?

Species Conservation Act Consideration:

Please continue to consider applicable provincial legislation as it relates to federal lands and jurisdiction, including the *Species Conservation Act, 2005* during project planning and implementation, as certain provincial legislation may continue to apply on federal lands.

Please note that the Protected Species in Ontario (PSO) List Regulation (O. Reg. 60/26) under the SCA does not include any aquatic species and migratory birds classified as extirpated, endangered or threatened on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Activities impacting species that are not listed on the PSO List under the SCA do not require registration, an exception, or a permit under the SCA. Proponents must comply with any obligations under the federal SARA, *Migratory Birds Convention Act,* and *Fisheries Act.*

6. Identify the contact information for your jurisdiction provided to the public for the proposed project. This could be a generic email box or specific to your jurisdiction's role in the project (e.g. permits, authorizations, guidance or funding within your jurisdiction's mandate.)

Environmental assessment matters: Fatima.Ahmed4@ontario.ca

Environmental permission or registration matters: enviropermissions@ontario.ca

Species at risk matters: SAROntario@ontario.ca

7. Based on the Initial Project Description, confirm what project components and activities you would consider relevant in relation to permits, authorizations or guidance within your jurisdiction's mandate.

Project components and activities that may be relevant in relation to MECP permits and authorizations include:

- Modifications to certain existing interchanges and intersections
- Disposition of rights to Crown resources to use or occupy Ontario Crown land
- Construction or modifications of certain municipal infrastructure carried out by a municipality or water and wastewater public corporation
- Water taking/dewatering activities
- Stormwater management facilities
- Sewage generated from onsite workforce facilities
- Management of excess soils generated during construction
- Management of waste during construction
- Activities impacting a species that is protected under the SCA or its habitat

8. Will your jurisdiction be issuing a permit, authorization or be involved in the aforementioned project in a regulatory manner? If so, indicate below.

The below-noted regulatory requirements may apply to certain project components or activities. MECP will work with the proponent to confirm applicability of these requirements.

Environmental assessment (EA)

Modifications to certain existing interchanges and intersections may be subject to the Class EA for Provincial Transportation Facilities and Municipal Expressways.

Disposition of rights to Crown resources may be subject to the Class EA for Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects. Please note that the ministry recently consulted on a proposal to revoke this Class EA, but a decision has not been reached. Depending on the outcome of that proposal, the applicability of this Class EA to the project may differ. For more information, please refer to proposal here.

Construction and modifications to certain municipal infrastructure may be subject to the Municipal Class EA or Part II.4 Streamlined EAs under the EA Act (effective starting January 1, 2027).

Water taking / dewatering activities

Water taking or dewatering activities may require a Permit to Take Water under the *Ontario Water Resources Act* (OWRA) or registration on the Environmental Activity and Sector Registry. Where a Permit to Take Water is required, applications should be submitted 6 months in advance of planned activities (e.g. earthworks and/or excavation). Depending on project requirements, construction dewatering activities are likely eligible for registration on the Environmental Activity and Sector Registry, where the applicant receives instant approval to proceed with the proposed activity upon registration.

Please note that in-stream diversions of water, and water taking from within cofferdams, is typically exempt from the requirement for water taking permissions from MECP.

Sewage works / stormwater management

Stormwater management infrastructure/facilities and management of sewage from onsite workforce facilities may require an Environmental Compliance Approval under the OWRA.

Excess soils

Excess soils generated during construction activities may need to be managed in accordance with O. Reg. 406/19 and the Rules for soil management and excess soil quality standards.

Waste management

Waste generated during construction may need to be managed in accordance with *Environmental Protection Act* and its regulations, including *Regulation 347*. Depending on the type of waste generated, requirements may apply for the transportation, management, processing, or disposal of waste, including contaminated soil. Requirements for managing potential spills/pollutants can also be found under the *Environmental Protection Act*.

Certain waste management activities may require an Environmental Compliance Approval or be eligible for registration on the Environmental Activity and Sector Registry.

Species at Risk

Depending on the activity and whether it may impact a species that is protected under the SCA or its habitat, a proponent may be required to register, obtain a permit under the SCA, or may be eligible to proceed under an applicable exception.

9. For any permits or authorizations to be issued, provide a short description of each with specific information on the location or component of the project to which the permit or authorization would be applicable.

See response to question #8.

10. Will there be opportunities for engagement with the public or Indigenous groups as part of the regulatory or review process by your jurisdiction? If so, when is this likely to occur?

Projects/activities subject to provincial EA processes such as the Class EA for Provincial Transportation Facilities and Municipal Expressways, Class EA for Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects and Part II.4 Streamlined EAs generally have public and Indigenous consultation requirements that the applicable proponent must fulfill. Crown decisions such as issuing permits/approvals under the *Ontario Water Resources Act* may trigger the Crown's duty to consult with Indigenous communities when the decisions have the potential to adversely affect Aboriginal and/or treaty rights. When the Crown's duty to consult is triggered, the procedural aspects of consultation may be delegated to the proponent. Certain permits/approvals under MECP legislation require public consultation through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (typically minimum 30-day comment period) per the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993* (EBR). Certain exceptions from this consultation requirement may apply (e.g. per sections 29-33 of the EBR).

11. Will your jurisdiction be providing any participant funding?

No

Fatima Ahmed Program Support Coordinator Environmental Assessment Branch Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks	October 13, 2026
Name of responder	Date

If you have any difficulties, you may contact IAAC via email at EastBridge-PontEst@iaac-aeic.gc.ca.