

FAQs ABOUT BILL C-23:

WHAT IS BILL C-23?

Bill C-23 provides for the designation of places, persons and events that are of national historic significance or national interest, and fosters the protection and conservation of the heritage value of federally owned or regulated heritage places.

WILL THIS BILL AFFECT HERITAGE PLACES IN MY RIDING? Yes, places addressed by the Bill exist in all parts of Canada.

(Use the Directory of Federal Heritage Designations to find affected properties in your community:

https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/search-recherche_eng.aspx?_ga=2.119710733.402522312.1675294914-162974144.1675294914

NOTE: Only federally owned or regulated places will be affected by the Bill. Most National Historic Sites listed are NOT owned by the federal government.

WHY SHOULD MPs SUPPORT THE BILL?

- 1) The legislation is long overdue. For decades, Canada has been the only G7 country without legislation to protect federal heritage places.
- 2) Without it, heritage is at risk. There are numerous examples of federally owned or regulated heritage places that have deteriorated or been demolished by neglect, despite heritage status.
- 3) Bill C-23 improves the status quo, harmonizing several related pieces of legislation , creating a public register of federal heritage places, enshrining the inclusion of Indigenous representatives on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board and providing an Indigenous-led process for including places in the Public Register, and giving status to the *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* and the *World Heritage Convention*.
- 4) With the 9 recommended amendments, the Bill will address gaps in heritage protection and stewardship, addressing issues noted in several past reports by Auditors General.

WHAT AMENDMENTS ARE NEEDED?

A heritage sector working group has identified 9 recommended amendments inspired by existing policies, practices and definitions in law, and reasonable interpretations of intent:

1. **Extend the scope of the Bill to apply to all heritage places under federal control.** It is not reasonable to exclude the National Museums, federal post offices, the Bank of Canada and other significant heritage places owned by Crown Corporations across Canada from the protection of the Bill.
2. **Build in provisions for effective accountability, monitoring and reporting,** as recommended by a parliamentary committee and by the Auditor General. The intent is to keep heritage places on the radar and prevent demolition by neglect (Example: 24 Sussex).
3. **Improve processes for conservation and stewardship** by assigning and clarifying roles.
4. **Allow for pro-active engagement of stakeholders,** to improve conservation outcomes.
5. **Avoid confusion and unintended consequences** by using terms and accepted definitions found in related legislation and policies. Retain the term, **National Historic Sites of Canada** (NHSC) which has great meaning not just for federally-owned properties, but for the nearly 1,000 NHSCs owned by others.
6. Explicitly **include settings and landscapes** of heritage places to ensure interventions consider impact on the entire place, not just building footprints, for example.
7. **Ensure protection of places even when they leave federal ownership.** This is a longstanding positive Canada Lands Corporation practice and has been employed in the divestiture of heritage railways stations and lighthouses, for example.
8. Include measures to ensure federal actions **do no harm** to heritage places as identified by others.
9. Revise draft Bill C-23 to be consistent with **UNDRIP**.

WOULD BILL C-23 MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR 24 SUSSEX – IN THE NEWS FOR THE COST OF ITS REPAIR?

This Bill with the recommended amendments could have prevented the lack of oversight that allowed decades of deferred maintenance to take their toll on 24 Sussex, a nationally significant structure. The recommended amendments would also provide a clear process to guide decision making and give Canadians and knowledgeable parties a voice in the future of the property.

Aside from heritage value, existing structures like 24 Sussex represents an investment of embodied energy and sunk carbon that should not be wasted. Bill C-23 with recommended amendments is an opportunity for the federal government to show leadership in the stewardship of heritage property, and the environment.

WOULD THIS BILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO CASES LIKE THE CONTROVERSIAL ADDITION TO THE CHATEAU LAURIER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA?

No. While the Chateau Laurier carries a federal designation as National Historic Site as provided for in Bill C-23, it is not owned or regulated by the federal government and therefore the Bill's provisions for protection and conservation do not apply to it. The majority of National Historic Sites (including the Chateau Laurier) are not owned by the federal government, thus the protection and oversight provisions of Bill C-23 would not apply to them. This Bill would however provide for the designation of future National Historic Sites like the Chateau Laurier regardless of ownership.

Ideally, NHS not owned by government are protected by local governments who can designate them using heritage bylaws enabled by provincial/territorial heritage legislation.