

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE
CELEBRATION SALE

Save big on all Porter flights!
Book by June 10, 2013. Travel by October 6, 2013.

porter

Go behind the scenes at Queen's Park

Sunday, June 9, 2013
11:47 AM EDT



thestar.com

QUEEN'S PARK

Sign in



Search the archives

- > HOME
- > NEWS
 - GTA
 - Queen's Park
 - Canada
 - World
 - Investigations
 - Crime
- > YOUR TORONTO
- > OPINION
- > SPORTS
- > BUSINESS
- > ENTERTAINMENT
- > LIFE
- > DIVERSIONS
- > CLASSIFIEDS
- > OBITUARIES

News / Queen's Park

Nuisance lawsuits targeted by Ontario government

The Ontario government is finally clamping down on nuisance lawsuits filed to silence critics by tying them up in court.

Text size: Reset



Report an Error

+ save to mystar



COLIN MCCONNELL / TORONTO STAR

John Gerretsen unveiled new legislation to crack down on nuisance lawsuits.

By: **Robert Benzie** Queen's Park Bureau Chief, Published on Tue Jun 04 2013

The Ontario government is finally clamping down on nuisance lawsuits filed to silence critics by tying them up in court.

After three years of study, Attorney General John Gerretsen on Tuesday introduced a bill designed to curb "strategic litigation against public participation" (SLAPP) suits.

"We believe that this law will provide a balanced approach that recognizes both the right to public expression and the importance of protection of reputation," Gerretsen told reporters at the University of Toronto law school.

The attorney general said the proposed legislation would

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE
CELEBRATION SALE

Save big on all Porter flights!
Book by June 10, 2013
Travel by October 6, 2013

porter

Top News

- ▶ **NEW** South Africans pray for Mandela as ex-leader remains 'serious but stable'
- ▶ Paul Cellucci, former U.S. ambassador to Canada, dies at 65
- ▶ **NEW** Family of Brampton man missing in Australia doubles reward
- ▶ **NEW** Mexico turns wasteland into wonderland — complete with tacos
- ▶ Ontario hospitals absorb health costs to treat refugees :
- ▶ Koffler Scientific Reserve litter tour delights :
- ▶ Esseghaier's Qur'an demand reveals law/religion collision
- ▶ Burka meets bikini at Egypt's new alcohol-free Red Sea resort

Most Popular

- Toronto Hydro using workers in India :
- Murder suspect Mladen Ivezic extradited from Greece
- Swedish Princess Madeleine weds New York banker :
- Argeo Paul Cellucci, former U.S. ambassador to Canada, dies at 65

EXPLORE THIS STORY

1 PHOTO
7 COMMENTS

+ save to mystar

Like Recommend

Tweet 18

Pin it

+1 1

Republish

Inside thestar.com



Pro-choice and pro-life: What three abortions have taught me



Stephen Harper's jet makeover slammed by opposition



Rob Ford crack video scandal: Resident of

mystar

20° Toronto

- My Horoscope
- Good News
- My Team
- My Writers
- My Newsletters
- This Day in History

home in photo
trafficked cocaine

force the courts to identify within 60 days — by quickly hearing requests to dismiss — whether a suit was in the public interest or just an intimidation tactic to limit debate on a controversial matter.

He noted that the majority of SLAPPs are filed as defamation claims of libel or slander and have so little merit that they are often withdrawn before going to trial.

In the past, the ploy has been used by property developers and big corporations to stymie opponents of their projects.

Gerretsen said even though the legislature is expected to rise for the summer break on June 13 — a week later than scheduled — he is hopeful the bill can be passed this fall and take effect in 2014.

Mayo Moran, dean of the U of T's faculty of law and chair of the government's 2010 expert panel on the issue, stressed "public participation is vital to a flourishing democracy."

Moran said the legislation would help encourage "robust debate on issues of public importance."

David Sterns, the Ontario Bar Association's public affairs chair, said it would expedite the hearings for "legitimate claims" because the courts wouldn't be clogged up with specious suits.

"Public confidence depends on the ability of our justice system to operate efficiently and to enhance democratic principles. Both of these goals are threatened by the bad-faith litigation that this new legislation is designed to curb," said Sterns.

NDP leader Andrea Horwath, who has been pushing for anti-SLAPP laws for the past five years, said it's about time the Liberals acted.

"It's important ... because it takes away the threat of big companies with all kinds of resources being able to bring those resources to a lawsuit against a community volunteer group, for example," said Horwath.

"The companies use their financial muscle to silence community activists, which is not a health way to have a real, vigorous debate about a proposal in terms of some kind of development," she said.

Progressive Conservative deputy leader Christine Elliott said her party wanted to pore over the legislation before weighing in.

Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller has long called for anti-SLAPP laws to stop developers from encroaching upon ecologically sensitive areas.

Burka meets bikini at Egypt's new alcohol-free Red Sea resort

Music seals bond between father and son

The Kit: The 4 key bridal trends for fall 2013

The Grid: How does one get on Cash Cab? Host Adam Grove reveals his favourite driving routes

Cover up kids this summer

Asia Travel: Chengdu city sizzles in beautiful Sichuan

On Twitter

We value respectful and thoughtful discussion. Readers are encouraged to flag comments that fail to meet the standards outlined in our [Community Code of Conduct](#). For further information, including our legal guidelines, please see our full website [Terms and Conditions](#).

[Share page](#)
[Subscribe via RSS](#)

Comments (7)

- Most Likes
- Popular
- Popular All Time
- Videos
- Oldest



TheBigBopper [4 days ago](#)

It's odd that the Cons always seem to be not so interested in legislation that might actually hurt their business buddies in some way. Hypocrites, they claim to be the little guy's friend but in reality they are only interested in business.

[Share](#) | [Reply](#) |

1



Skippy88 [4 days ago](#)

Easy solution just make sure you can't withdraw a lawsuit unless the two parties come to an agreement. Either you are in or your out. No in between. Then **somehow** get the court system to hear the lawsuits done in a timely manner.

[Share](#) | [Reply](#) |



Hwy 61 [3 days ago](#)

It was because of the overload in the courts that the administrative tribunal system was set up - and now IT's overloaded. Could it possibly be that it's time to set up more mediation and less confrontation? It's very seldom that anyone actually gets a positive outcome from a lawsuit.

[Share](#) | [Reply](#) |



sika [4 days ago](#)

just like the g-20 in Toronto, must be a nuisance

[Share](#) | [Reply](#) |

2



joeyasweknowit [4 days ago](#)

Another deflection storywhere are we with the class action to recover the power plant money ; must be a nuisance .

[Share](#) | [Reply](#) |



movie_enjoyer [4 days ago](#)

clearly you need a lesson in law and democracy.

[Share](#) | [Reply](#) |

2



Aaron B [4 days ago](#)

You know what really is a "Nuisance"; the fact that 90% of the public making the national

average cannot access the courts. There is no justice when 10% of the population are the ones with sole access to the courts due to financial reasons.

Share | Reply |

8 [3 more](#)

[Load more comments](#)



ON-TIME PERFORMANCE
CELEBRATION SALE

Save big on all Porter flights!
Book by June 10, 2013. Travel by October 6, 2013.

porter



New hotel in Cuba
Meliá Marina Varadero ready for summer



Inbox Control
Manage your inbox with these cool apps.



The best paid jobs
In Canada are found in the NWT



Grow your Business
How to tap into the new Canadian Immigrant?



Discover Menkes
Shaping life stories across the GTA.



Enjoy Wine in TO
Best Date Spots for Wine Lovers

thestar.com

- News
- Your Toronto
- Opinion
- Sports
- Business
- Entertainment
- Life
- Diversions
- Classifieds
- Site Map

- Insurance Hotline
- New in Homes
- Star Store
- Blogs
- Contests
- Lottery Results
- Obituaries
- Corrections
- Public Editor
- Contact Webmaster
- FAQ
- Behavioural Targeting

Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd.

- About
- Atkinson Principles
- Statement of Principles
- Subscribe
- My Subscription
- Contact Us
- News Releases
- Star Internships
- Careers @ the Star

Advertise with us

- Advertising Terms
- Mediakit
- Online Advertising
- Print Advertising
- Special Sections
- Sponsored Sections

Initiatives

- Santa Claus Fund
- Fresh Air Fund
- Speakers Bureau
- Classroom Connection
- Pages of the Past

Connect with Us

- RSS feeds
- Twitter Updates
- News Alerts
- Newsletters
- Mobile Devices