Finding: Doug Ford's Gift of $66 Million to Staples Fails to Protect Ontario or Canada

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1. Background

The Information Research Board (IRB) Inc. has published two sets of reports which contribute directly to the design and content of this report, **Finding: Doug Ford's Gift of $66 Million to Staples Fails to Protect Ontario or Canada**.

For the convenience of readers, links are used to identify the reports.

The first set of reports examine activities, decisions, choices, etc., of Canadian provincial and federal politicians which affect protecting Canada's and Canadians' sovereignty, autonomy, independence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-worth, and other measures of personal and national well-being that warrant protection by politicians at all levels to ensure Canada remains a free and democratic society.

These reports include:

- Results of Request to Premier Doug Ford and 11 Cabinet Ministers for Evidence of Action Taken to Protect Ontario's Farmland Inventory and Food Security
- Sovereign Canada Means NO to the U.S.-Controlled F-35
- "America is More than the U.S." Information Research Board Letter to the Editor, Temiskaming Speaker, October 22, 2025
- Canadian Broadcast Media Wrong to Use 'America' in Productions Solely about People or Entities in or from United States
- Canadian Politicians Wrong to Use 'America' in Public Statements Solely about People or Entities in or from United States
- DOES DONALD TRUMP HAVE THE KNOW-HOW TO SAVE THE U.S.A.?

The key action term in the reports cited above is "protect", it is the key action term in the title of this report and protect is the primary policy action term in Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, which received royal assent on June 5, 2025.

(**Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025**)

The second set of reports represent a core function of the Information Research Board, by critically examining the research methods, research techniques, and research operations employed in deciding why and how gifting $66 million to Staples, a U.S.-based corporation, contributes to implementing Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act.

By way of brief context for those who have not examined IRB productions, the focus of these reports is on critically examining how information and evidence are derived, tested, and applied.

A selection of recent reports of this nature follows, and dozens of other research methods, techniques, and operations reports are available at https://wellar.ca/informationresearch/.

- Research Update on How Combining Universal Law of Location, Game Theory, and GIS Could Contribute to More Informed Land Use Decisions
    - Link to webinar recording
    - Slide deck (PDF)

- There Is No Apparent Evidence of Gridlock to Justify Spending $50 Billion to $90 Billion (est.) on a Tunnel Under Highway 401 in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)

- Applying Universal Law of Location as a Land Use Planning Decision Tool: Municipal Government Data, Evidence, and Research Studies Must be Upgraded to Enable Informed Decisions that Best Use and Preserve the Province's Threatened Agricultural Land Inventory

- Applying Universal Law of Location as a Land Use Planning Decision Tool: Ontario Government Data, Evidence, and Research Studies Must be Upgraded to Enable Informed Decisions that Best Use and Preserve the Province's Threatened Farmland Inventory

- Applying Universal Law of Location as a Transportation Planning Decision Tool: Ontario Government Data and Evidence Fail to Support Positions on Gridlock, Congestion, and Removal of Bike Lanes

- Universal Law of Location as a Land Use Planning Decision Tool: Analysis of Ottawa Mayor's Pledge to Plant 1,000,000 Trees

- Universal Law of Location Supported by GIS as a Best Practice Element in Land Use Planning and Transportation Planning Decision Systems

Two overriding findings in those productions are the catalysts behind this study, and are summarized as follows.

First, there are substantial bodies of evidence reporting on the repeated failure of federal, provincial, and municipal politicians to properly inform citizens of government policy, plan, program, and operational decisions and actions. (**1**)

In this study the focus is on Ontario Premier Doug Ford for his government's failure to properly inform Ontario residents about how gifting $66 million to Staples, a U.S. corporation, protects their personal interests, or protects Canada's and Canadians' sovereignty, autonomy, independence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-worth, and other measures of national well-being that warrant protection by politicians to preserve Canada's standing as a free and democratic society. (**2**)

Second, there are substantial bodies of documentation reporting on the repeated failure of federal, provincial, and municipal politicians to properly inform citizens of research methods, research techniques, and research operations used to derive, test, and apply information and evidence to government decisions and actions. (**3**)

In this report the focus is on confirming the finding that whatever means were used by or for Ford and his government to arrive at the Staples gift decision and the contents of associated public statements, the action of gifting $66 million of Ontarians' tax dollars to Staples fails to protect Ontarians', Canda's, or Canadians' sovereignty, autonomy, independence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-worth, and other measures of personal and national well-being.

2. A Brief Account of the Skimpy Public Record "Announcing" the Apparent Gift of $66 to Staples

News of an apparent gift of $66 million to Staples by Premier Ford came in the way of muddled pronouncements by the premier, because the story behind the gift was largely done verbally in the form of out-of-breath phrase bites in totally controlled, no questions asked or answered press presentations, and after which the cone of silence was dropped and accountability avoided. (**4**)

That is, Ford did not respond to questions by members of the media, and emails were automatically acknowledged but did not yield even shallow replies much less ones of a substantive nature.

Further, and perhaps because it appears Ford has little training or experience in designing or using research methods, research techniques, and research operations to derive, test, and apply information and evidence to government decisions and actions, it appears fair to say that Ford took the escape route which is often the default tactic employed by politicians.

In brief, they make statements that are clear as mud but cover the ground, and then quickly shift gears and directions by moving on to the next pronouncement to deflect attention. (**5**)

As for the "skimpy" term, it may be on the generous side because searches of extant government documents, broadcast media reports, and social media posts failed to yield

productions in the public domain which describe in verifiable detail the reasons behind the decision by Premier Doug Ford to gift Staples $66 million.

Further, the searches failed to yield public domain or open literature productions by Ford or anyone else describing the decision methods, techniques, and operations employed by or for Premier Ford to justify the $66 million gift to Staples, a U.S. corporation. (**6**)

Therefore, based on non-responses by Premier Doug Ford to many dozens of communications over the past three terms of him holding office as premier, it was deemed likely that the non-response pattern would continue.

Consequently, the research design introduces a "wrinkle" which enables the IRB research team to by-pass what might be termed "cone of silence" tactics employed by Premier Ford. (**7**)

That is, Premier Ford has not been forthcoming on many previous occasions, and is not likely to be forthcoming when faced with questions about the perceived gifting of $66 million to Staples.

As a result, it is taken to be methodologically reasonable under the circumstances to challenge Premier Ford to demonstrate that his decision to gift Staples $66 million was based on applying research methods, techniques, and operations above, at, or near the best practices level.

Hence, in the event that answers and evidence are not provided or obtainable in response to legitimate questions about Ford's decision process in this matter, then it can reasonably be taken as given that Premier Ford has no answers or evidence derived from the application of research methods, techniques and operations of any kind, much less those which are at or near the best practices level, not even for Ford's gifting of $66 million Ontario taxpayer dollars to Staples, a U.S. corporation. (**8**)

In summary, I am off-loading the task of overcoming the skimpy record problem in order to better to inform readers of the full details of the Staples deal, and I will use my skills of interpolation and extrapolation to make inferences based on the skimpy record that I could find in statements by Doug Ford regarding the Staples "deal".

That said, if Doug Ford informs IRB of verifiable errors of omission or commission which are likely to affect non-trivial parts of **Finding: Doug Ford's Gift of $66 Million to Staples Fails to Protect Ontario or Canada**, then the report will be re-visited when time and IRB project resources permit.

3. The Record of Communications Leading to the Finding that Doug Ford's Apparent Gift of $66 Million to Staples Was Not Based on Methodologically Derived Information or Evidence and Does Nothing to Protect Ontario or Canada in Any Way, Shape, or Form

The first communication of record (Exhibit 1) is a letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, which is titled "Making it all add up".

Exhibit 1. Letter to the Editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Making it all add up

August 12, 2026 Temiskaming Speaker Page 5a

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Making it all add up

Dear editor,

May I extend the outstanding editorial, "Favoured status" (July 29) by presenting several results from the Information Research Board's investigation into the financial, economic, and sovereignty impacts that individual Canadians could have on reducing the influence of U.S. corporations on Canada.

It is emphasized that the numbers are "rough" estimates because of erratic fluctuations in trade and financial markets caused primarily by Trump's tariff nonsense, and because multiple searches have not located open and verifiable records published by U.S. corporations, or by Canadian or U.S. government agencies.

Putting matters in context using firms familiar to many Canadians, annual expenditures by Canadians on goods and services purchased from just 12 U.S-based companies, Amazon, COSTCO, Exxon Mobil, FEDEX, Ford, GM, Home Depot, MasterCard, McDonalds, Meta, VISA, and Walmart, are about $165,000,000,000, yes, 165 billion dollars per year, every year.

Our related estimate is that more than $115 billion of those dollars leave Canada to end up in U.S. corporate coffers.

As for the overall outflow of Canadian dollars for purchases of goods and services from U.S. corporations, it is in the range of $575 billion-$675 billion per year, which works out to $14,000-$16,000 annually for each of Canada's 41.4 million Canadians.

Those numbers have major economic and sovereignty consequences.

If every Canadian annually shifts just $1,000, $2,000, or $3,000 of discretionary spending from U.S. corporations to Canadian corporations, the amounts flowing to current and new Canadian corporations are $41.4 billion, $82.8 billion, and $124.2 billion per year.

In addition to giving Canada's economy a significant short-term boost, if half those dollars go to wages and salaries paying an average of $75,000, about 275,000, 550,000, and 835,000 positions respectively are added to Canada's employment sector without counting jobs added via cumulative multiplier effects.

I hasten to emphasize that while the state of Canada's sovereignty is not defined solely by the state of its balance sheets, it appears fair to say that if millions of Canadians spend more of their dollars on goods and services made in Canada by Canadians, they will improve many of our balance sheets and strengthen Canada's sovereignty in the process.

Finally, and this could be the most significant consequence of Canadians aggressively taking charge of their financial, economic, and sovereign destinies by putting Canada first in their decisions, our politicians may be compelled to aggressively put Canada's sovereignty first in their decisions that affect owning, mining, refining, and marketing Canada's invaluable critical minerals.

Dr. Barry Wellar (formerly from Latchford), Professor emeritus, University of Ottawa, President, Information Research Board, Member, Order of Canada, Ottawa

Comments on Exhibit 1

The entirety of the letter contributes to ***Finding: Doug Ford's Gift of $66 Million to Staples Fails to Protect Ontario or Canada***.

However, comments on three paragraphs presented as Exhibit 2, Exhibit 3, and Exhibit 4 are sufficient to underpin critical examinations of all subsequent exhibits and comments which lead unequivocally to confirmation of the finding that Doug Ford's gift of $66 million to Staples fails to protect Ontario or Canada.

Exhibit 2. Where Are Published Lists Compiled by Federal and Provincial/Territorial Governments Which Document the Amounts of Money that Canadians Spend on Annual Purchases of Goods and Services from U.S. Corporations?

Comments on Exhibit 2

The paragraph from Exhibit 1, "Putting matters in context using firms familiar to many Canadians, annual expenditures by Canadians on goods and services purchased from just 12 U.S-based companies, Amazon, COSTCO, Exxon Mobil, FEDEX, Ford, GM, Home Depot, MasterCard, McDonalds, Meta, VISA, and Walmart, are about $165,000,000,000,

yes, 165 billion dollars per year, every year." identifies a situation that might prompt some readers to think that Canada's federal and provincial governments have detailed financial records on how much money annually leaves Canada for the coffers of thousands of U.S. corporations annually.

My searches did not reveal any such federal or provincial/territorial government lists in the public domain.

If it is in fact the reality that there are no lists of that nature, then it means that all of Canada's senior governments, including the Ontario government and Doug Ford, as well as hundreds of politicians and thousands of highly paid civil servants across Canada lack the wits and/or inclination to properly inform and engage millions of Canadians in protecting Ontario's and Canada's sovereignty, autonomy, independence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-worth, and other measures of personal and national well-being.

As for context which puts the apparent lack of publicly available documentation detailing how much money U.S. corporations annually remove from Canada, I am reminded of the heads-up expressed by Professor Frank Knox, Queen's University, in his 1960 ECO 4 course.

Prof. Knox's point was that in the late 1950s and going into the 1960s, Japan was a formidable economic, financial, and manufacturing force because of a focus on knowing more about the strengths and weakness of its current and potential trading partners than the partners do.

The apparent fact that the Government of Ontario and Doug Ford have little or no clue about how much money Staples annually bleeds out of Ontario is worrisome.

However, even more worrisome is the kind of "thinking" that led to a decision to gift $66 million to a corporation headquartered in a foreign country whose president has repeatedly made ill-informed, bellicose remarks that seem designed to undermine Canadians' sense of sovereignty, autonomy, independence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-worth, and other measures of personal and national well-being.

Exhibit 3. If An Annual Average of $85 Million Is Paid to Staples Over Ten Years. then It All Adds up to a Gift of $850,000,000

From Exhibit 1. "I hasten to emphasize that while the state of Canada's sovereignty is not defined solely by the state of its balance sheets, it appears fair to say that if millions of Canadians spend more of their dollars on goods and services made in Canada by Canadians, they will improve many of our balance sheets and strengthen Canada's sovereignty in the process."

Comments on Exhibit 3

All governments in Canada are penniless, have no assets of any kind, and totally live off the dollars provided by taxpayers.

It is my belief that ordinary citizens are more powerful and persuasive voices for Ontario and Canada than politicians in Canada-U.S. relations, and that they must step up in order to assert their place as the primary movers and shakers when it comes to protecting Canadians' and Canadas' sovereignty, autonomy, independence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-worth, and other measures of personal and national well-being.

The conflict, therefore, is that ordinary citizens are tasked to take account of their personal spending on purchases of goods and services from U.S. corporations, but they may have no control over government expenditures of their tax dollars on goods and services purchased from U.S. corporations.

Exhibit 4. Based on the Staples Gift Involving School Supplies, Doug Ford Must Be Excluded from Critical Minerals Discussions with All Parties and Especially Those Representing U.S. Interests

From Exhibit 1, "Finally, and this could be the most significant consequence of Canadians aggressively taking charge of their financial, economic, and sovereign destinies by putting Canada first in their decisions, our politicians may be compelled to aggressively put Canada's sovereignty first in their decisions that affect owning, mining, refining, and marketing Canada's invaluable critical minerals."

Comments on Exhibit 4

Based on his record, it appears to logically follow that Doug Ford would gift away critical mineral mines due to lack of education, training, or experience, or even to serve simple political expedience if he perceived the gifting could garner votes, but gifting $66 million to a U.S. corporation for school supplies makes a joke of Ford's Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act.

The final communication elaborating Exhibit 1 is Exhibit 5, which is an email to Premier Ford regarding the letter to the editor "Making it all add up", August 12, 2026.

Exhibit 5. Email to Premier Doug Ford re Individual Canadians Key to Defining Canada's Financial, Economic, and Sovereignty Futures

From: wellar.barry@gmail.com <wellar.barry@gmail.com>
Sent: August 23, 2026 6:42 PM
To: 'Premier of Ontario | Premier ministre de l'Ontario' <Premier@ontario.ca>

Cc: 'George A. Neville' <george.neville@ncf.ca>; 'douglasarnold douglasarnold' <douglasarnold@sympatico.ca>; 'le hibou' <ottawaowl2@yahoo.ca>; 'George Lefebvre' <shasonje@gmail.com>; 'Steve Larocque' <speaker.steve@northernontario.ca>; 'Gordon Brock' <gordon.e.brock@gmail.com>; wellar.barry@gmail.com; premier@manitoba.ca; 'Marit Stiles' <marit.stiles@ontariondp.ca>; jfraser.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org; 'Nicole Feriancek' <nferiancek@postmedia.com>
Subject: Individual Canadians Key to Defining Canada's Financial, Economic, and Sovereignty Futures

Dear Premier Ford,

As you may be aware, many Canadians are fed up with news reports about our politicians and officials engaging in round after round of dysfunctional trade discussions compounded by goofy tirades spouted pompously by Trump and re-spouted by his sycophants regarding tariffs.

I hasten to attest that I am one of those Canadians, and to also state that I have had Canada-U.S. trade concerns that long precede being affronted by Trump's nonsensical notions about tariffs, and his failed grasp of the mutual benefits of informed trade relations.

In the latter regard, the symposium **National and Regional Economic Development Strategies: Perspectives on Canada's Problems and Prospects**, B. Wellar ed. Ottawa, ON: University of Ottawa Press, 1981, covered many topics that have been part of Canada-U.S. discussions involving free trade, NAFTA, CUSMA, and related matters.

Which brings me to the topic of breaking away from the same old, same old model and adopting an approach that actively engages millions of Canadians as key players serving and promoting Canada's financial, economic, geo-political, and sovereignty well-being.

In my discussions with colleagues, the topic of Canada-U.S. financial, economic, geo-political, and sovereignty relations during the time of Trump are frequently deconstructed, and there is an overriding source of deep puzzlement that perplexes us to great extent.

That is, why has the federal government not changed its strategies/tactics by more directly involving Canadians in a matter which is far too significand to the nation's financial, economic, geo-political, and sovereignty well-being to be left solely to the devices of politicians and officials who are, relatively speaking, here today and gone tomorrow.

Moreover, while Trump can play to his U.S. followers when messing around with Canadian politicians and officials, the same cannot be said about him using abusive and threatening language when his remarks are directed at Canadian citizens.

I take up this theme in a letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, which was published August 12, 2026, under the title, "Making it all add up". The letter is attached.

What we are adding up is illustrated by two sets of numbers which have attracted much attention.

First, it is estimated that the annual expenditure by 41.4 million Canadians on purchases of goods and services from U.S. corporations is on the order of $14,000-$16,000.

Second, Canadians' expenditures on goods and services purchased from U.S. corporations is estimated to be on the order of $575-$675 billion per year.

I suggest in the letter that if Canadians annually shift $1,000, $2,000 or $3,000 on purchases of goods and services from U.S. to Canadian corporations, the impacts on Canada's financial, economic and sovereignty well-being would be significant, with emphasis on the impacts on Canada's employment sector.

As for putting more faith in the decision-making prudence of Canadian consumers, I hasten to note that I have informed company when referring to the 'clout' of individual Canadians regarding trade matters.

My informed company is Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew who spoke to the U.S. liquor bottle of contention, and his position (paraphrased in the interests of space) is to let Canadians decide whether to leave U.S. booze on the shelves.

The email sent to Premier Kinew regarding his comment follows.

With that background material in place, I seek your assistance in learning about productions by federal agencies which might assist in elaborating, expanding, or correcting statements made in the Temiskaming Speaker letter to the editor, or the communication to Premier Kinew.

I emphasize as context for my request that I was unable to find federal records that would assist in writing the letter, so the numbers in the letter are compiled from various sources.

Further, while I am aware of many failed searches of government records, the seeming lack of public materials pertinent to the Temiskaming Speaker letter causes me serious concern given the magnitude of the financial, economic, and sovereignty implications of the trade and tariff arguments and processes at issue.

It may be that reports are available, and your response to the following two questions will greatly assist the Information Research Board in deciding how to pursue matter raised in the letter to the editor, in the communication to premier Kinew, and in communications with researchers and other contacts.

1. Are reports available from federal agencies, including the PM's office, which consider any aspect of what I discuss in the letter to the editor?

If yes, please provide the links.

2. If no, what is the reason for not producing such reports and making them widely known and readily available to Canadians?

In closing, may I suggest that the 11th hour bad-faith trade discussion stunt by the U.S. which caused the Canadian delegation to be called home speaks volumes on behalf of the positions presented in this and associated communications.

Kind regards,

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Comments on Exhibit 5

This communication did not receive a response from Ford, which brings to mind the cone of silence tactic which has frequently been ascribed to Ford and his government. (**9**)

However, bearing in mind that Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act received royal assent on June 5, 2025, and this communication was sent to Ford 14 months later, it begs a profound question.

That is, for what reason would he not use the email communication to proclaim to one and all, and especially to broadcast and social media entities, that Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025, addresses all the issues raised in the letter to the editor.

The inference that advances itself is that Ford has no evidence to counter the concerns posited in the letter, and that such a failure to respond is consistent with finding that Ford's gift of $66 Million to Staples fails to protect Ontario or Canada. If there is an alternative explanation, it is invited.

Exhibit 6. Letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, September 30, 2026, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do"

Page 6a Temiskaming Speaker Wednesday, September 30, 2026

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do

Dear editor,

The recent comment by Premier Doug Ford that the provincial government's $66 million deal with Staples, a U.S. corporation, fits his "Buy Canadian" standard because Staples employs Canadians is dangerously unsound, and promotes Trump-type thinking that Canada is for sale by our politicians at bargain basement prices and low-paying jobs.

As I pointed out in a previous letter ("Making it all add up," August 12, Temiskaming Speaker), after taking into account amounts remunerated to Canada for salaries, wages, taxes, purchases of goods and services, etc., annual purchases of U.S. goods and services in Canada are in the $550-$650 billion range, and sometimes higher when Trump engages in tariff nonsense.

Annual outflows of that magnitude have major negative implications for Canada's financial, economic, job creation, employment generation, industrial capacity, and sovereign health among other concerns.

In the specific case of Staples, its annual revenue from 300 stores in Canada is in the vicinity of $1.8 billion, and it is estimated that more than $975 million of that revenue ends up in the United States.

In my experience, Doug Ford's standard for "Buy Canadian" is among the most bizarre I have ever encountered, and it is my further experience that Premier Ford has no sound evidence to justify gifting a U.S. corporation $66 million Ontario taxpayer dollars.

The apparent lack of evidence in the Staples gifting decision, and in a number of other cases where Ford's decisions are based on personal whim and not on verifiable evidence, lends credence to polls indicating that many Ontario voters are calling for a premier who makes decisions based on substantive, analytical evidence.

Should Premier Ford try to rise to the challenge, sound evidence in this case includes return on investment, and that includes a detailed accounting of what taxpayers are receiving in return for Ford's gift of $66 million taxpayer dollars to Staples, a multi-billion-dollar U.S. corporation.

Dr. Barry Wellar (formerly of Latchford), Member, Order of Canada, Professor Emeritus, University of Ottawa, President, Information Research Board

Comment on Exhibit 6

Harold Innis in his 1930 book, *The Fur Trade in Canada*, portrayed Canadians as hewers of wood and drawers of water in his description of Canada's historic economic dependence on exporting raw, natural resources rather than Canadian corporations and Canadians in Canada turning them into finished value-added goods made in Canada for both domestic and foreign markets.

Innis' writings were mentioned frequently in economics and geography courses in my undergraduate days at Queen's University, 1960-1965, and they again came to mind when I saw Ford's remark that Staples meets his "Buy Canadian" standard because Staples provides jobs in retail for Canadians.

To my mind, when Ford reduced Canadian's and Canada's financial, economic, job creation, employment generation, industrial capacity, and sovereign health among other aspirations to retail jobs at Staples, I believe that he affirmed his pre-1930 mindset about the current state and his preferred future of Ontario's and Canada's political economies.

However, perhaps I misunderstood his remark, and his informed response to a question about return on investment could cause me to withdraw my observation about Ford's pre-1930 political economy mindset that causes him to think that Canadians working retail jobs for Staples justifies gifting that U.S. corporation $66 million.

Exhibit 7. Asking Doug Ford to Reveal the Return on investment (ROI) Measures He Used When He Decided that Gifting Staples $66 Million Met his Standard of "Buy Canadian" and Is a Prudent, Cost-effective Way to Protect Ontario

From Exhibit 6, the last paragraph in the letter to the editor attempts to ascertain if Doug Ford has more than a vote-grabbing political interest in spending public dollars by informing him and/or his communications people that "Should Premier Ford try to rise to the challenge, sound evidence in this case includes return on investment, and that includes a detailed accounting of what taxpayers are receiving in return for Ford's gift of $66 million taxpayer dollars to Staples, a multi-billion-dollar U.S. corporation.

Comments on Exhibit 7

It appears fair to say that most every day, Doug Ford and members of his cabinet declare their accountability to the people of Ontario.

Therefore, Exhibit 6 should come as no surprise to Ford because Exhibit 6 is just one more accountability quest asking Ford to provide analytical evidence to demonstrate that his claim of accountability is not a fraud. (**10**)

It could very well be, I hasten to note, that Doug Ford may use the word "accountability" with little or no basic understanding of the fundamentals of accountability. (**11**)

If that is indeed the case, and Ford is aware that such is the case, then perhaps he might reach out to someone knowledgeable in such matters to learn that fully informing citizens about the return on an "investment" in the form of a gift of $66 million taxpayer dollars to Staples, a U.S. corporation, is totally expected by citizens who value their tax dollars.

And, conversely, by opening his mind to the thoughts of an informed thinker, he might learn that failing to inform citizens about the return of a so-called investment in the form of a gift of $66 million taxpayer dollars to Staples, a U.S. corporation, is a bottom-of-the-barrel tactic of a politician failing to hold himself accountable.

In effect, then, the ROI reference provides an opportunity for Doug Ford to go into detail about how the gift to Staples has payoffs to Canadians and Canada that are far removed from the days of receiving pennies on the dollar for what amounts to gifts of natural resources rather than finishing them in this country to the benefit of Canada's sovereignty, economy, workforce development, manufacturing diversification, entrepreneurial skills development, capital asset building, balance of trade strengthening, and other good things that happen when Canadians are masters in their own house.

Exhibit 8 picks up where Exhibit 7 concludes by discussing the email communication to Ford, copied to a number of politicians and others, regarding the Temiskaming Speaker letter to the editor titled, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do".

Exhibit 8. Email Communication to Premier Doug Ford re Letter to the Editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do"

From: wellar.barry@gmail.com <wellar.barry@gmail.com>
Sent: September 30, 2026 7:56 PM
To: 'Premier of Ontario | Premier ministre de l'Ontario' <Premier@ontario.ca>
Cc: 'mark carney' <mark.carney@parl.gc.ca>; 'jenna sudds' <jenna.sudds@parl.gc.ca>; dominic.leblanc@parl.gc.ca; david.mcguinty@parl.gc.ca; 'Marit Stiles' <marit.stiles@ontariondp.ca>; jfraser.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org; JVanthof-QP@ndp.on.ca; tylerwatt.mpp.co@ola.org; 'George A. Neville' <george.neville@ncf.ca>; 'douglasarnold douglasarnold' <douglasarnold@sympatico.ca>; 'George Lefebvre' <shasonje@gmail.com>; 'Steve Larocque' <speaker.steve@northernontario.ca>; wellar.barry@gmail.com; 'craig macaulay' <lvcarental@gmail.com>; 'Village Media' <help@villagemedia.ca>; kinga.surma@pc.ola.org; 'Nicole Feriancek'

<nferiancek@postmedia.com>; premier@manitoba.ca; 'Charlie Angus, The Resistance' <reply+2pwh0y&2xb8wv&&69ab21e23c691c7b320cb7243b98aceb833c87fb41ec1778d0c38e4c38d2c3ea@mg1.substack.com>
Subject: Letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do

Dear Premier Ford,

I call to your attention a recent letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do ", in which I am critical of your apparent decision to gift $66 million, that is, $66 million taxpayer dollars. to Staples, a U.S. corporation because, according to news stories I have heard or seen, Staples employs an unspecified number of Canadians.

The letter is attached for your convenance in the event that it has not already been made available to you via your communications or media clippings services, cabinet minister, MPPs, etc.

Premier Ford, by way of context for the letter to the editor and this communication, forty-six years ago I organized the Symposium on National and Regional Economic Development Strategies: Perspectives on Canada's Problems and Prospects.

A book of the same title was published to document the proceedings, and the book has been available for 45 years as of this writing.

In recognition of their significant contributions to Canadian discourse on national and regional economic development strategies, and the possibility that their names might "ring some bells" for your advisors, or anyone who participated in apparently deciding to gift Staples $66 million "in appreciation" (?) for unspecified jobs for unspecified Canadian at unspecified levels of remuneration, they are noted here in alphabetical order: Carl Beigie, Wayne Chavaldayoff, Tom Courchene, David Hipgrave, Don McGillivray, and Barry Wellar.

Premier Ford, with those proceedings and numerous other productions on economic development strategies taken into consideration, I am appalled at the publicly available flimsy and illogical reasoning behind the apparent decision to gift Staples the $66 million with no evidence that I have been able to locate which comprehensively describes the immediate and long-term returns on investment to taxpayers.

Premier Ford, I look forward to your detailed response to the letter to the editor and this communication.

Due to the significant political, geo-political, economic, financial, employment, business, entrepreneurial, sovereignty, and other consequences arising from the decision to gift

Staples $66 million, please reply within 10 business days to facilitate the Board publishing its report in a timely manner.

Thank you.

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https://wellar.ca/informationresearch/

Comment on Exhibit 8

As of this writing no reply has been received, which is why it was deemed likely when the email was being drafted that for two reasons in particular no reply would be received.

First, no substantive evidence has been encountered which establishes that Doug Ford has any expertise or experience in the design or implementation of local, regional or national economic development strategies.

It therefore follows that Ford's gift of $66 million to Staples has no basis of methodological design that has been documented in the field of economic development for far more than 50 years.

Rather, the gift is a gift, and Doug Ford is asked in the email to come clean and reveal to taxpayers the return to them of the gift to Staples.

And, if the $66 million is not a gift, then what is it, and what are the returns to current and future Ontarians and Canadians for the outlay of $66 million?

By now Doug Ford has had more than **six weeks** to come up with an explanation but, so far, nothing.

Second, as far back as the 1960s and 1970s, Ontario provincial civil servants were given high marks for their expertise in designing, planning, evaluating, and implementing local and regional economic development strategies, plans, programs, and operations, and setting the table so to speak, for politicians to make announcements which civil servants would then explain at, for example, bi- and tri-level intergovernmental meetings and conferences.

In my experience as a senior research officer (economist-statistician, information theme coordinator), assistant director of information technology, director of non-metropolitan

community development, and senior policy advisor at the federal Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, 1972-1979, that was the standard operating procedure for all levels of government.

However, over the past dozen years during Doug Ford's terms as premier, it has become standard operating procedure for Ford and ministers to impose a cone of silence on senior civil servants by not making them available to answer questions from citizens, and especially from citizens who are likely to know that most ministers are weak on ministry subject matter, and even weaker on analytical research methods and techniques that critically examine policy, plan and program decisions.

My body of reference in this regard includes communications from Ford and staffers of at least a dozen ministers who have dodged answering questions about many items, including questions about the names of civil servants responsible for ministerial announcements.

Their common escape route is the pathetic ploy of the Freedom of Information Act runaround. (**12**)

In closing this comment, I refer to my oversight of politicians over the past 60 years when it comes to the icing on the cake for this report titled **Finding: Doug Ford's Gift of $66 Million to Staples Fails to Protect Ontario or Canada.**

That is, after observing many thousands of events involving Canadian politicians in action, I have no recollection and no record of any politician who made a habit of not boasting, bragging, or informing all and sundry about achievements, no matter how trivial.

In the case of Doug Ford who brags about "buck-a-beer" and deep-sixing bike lanes as achievements, I believe that there would be no end of bragging and boasting if he had even a smidgen of evidence that gifting Staples $66 million protects Ontario or Canada.

Ford's silence is found to be a clear-cut admission that his decision to gift $66 million to Stapes, a U.S. corporation, totally contradicts Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, and therefore fails to protect Ontario and Canada.

The second email communication regarding Exhibit 8 picks up on the concept of cabinet solidarity, and the posit that all the blame for the Staples gift blunder does not fall on Ford.

Rather, the blunder of gifting Staples must have been a cabinet decision, even though it is widely held that Ford calls all the shots regarding Ontario-U.S. wheeling and dealing.

Given that the Staples gift of $66 million is a financial transaction, and Ford uses the phrase "Buy Canadian" which also involves financial transactions, it logically follows that Peter Bethlenvalvy, Minister of Finance, is the person best placed to recount in full detail the

methods and techniques used to evaluate the return-on-investment aspect of the decision, as per Exhibit 8.

Exhibit 9. Email Communication to Peter Bethlenfalvy re Letter to the Editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do"

From: wellar.barry@gmail.com <wellar.barry@gmail.com>
Sent: October 8, 2026 3:34 PM
To: peter.bethlenfalvy@pc.ola.org; 'Premier of Ontario | Premier ministre de l'Ontario' <Premier@ontario.ca>
Cc: 'mark carney' <mark.carney@parl.gc.ca>; dominic.leblanc@parl.gc.ca; 'jenna sudds' <jenna.sudds@parl.gc.ca>; david.mcguinty@parl.gc.ca; 'Marit Stiles' <marit.stiles@ontariondp.ca>; JVanthof-QP@ndp.on.ca; jfraser.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org; tylerwatt.mpp.co@ola.org; premier@manitoba.ca; 'George A. Neville' <george.neville@ncf.ca>; 'George Lefebvre' <shasonje@gmail.com>; 'douglasarnold douglasarnold' <douglasarnold@sympatico.ca>; 'craig macaulay' <lvcarental@gmail.com>; 'Steve Larocque' <speaker.steve@northernontario.ca>; 'Gordon Brock' <gordon.e.brock@gmail.com>; vic.fedeli@pc.ola.org; mike.harris@pc.ola.org; rob.flack@pc.ola.org
Subject: RE: Letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do", (revised)

Dear Minister Bethlenfalvy,

It seems likely that as Minister of Finance you have already been informed of the communication to Premier Doug Ford regarding the Information Research Board's request to be informed of the 'return on investment' flowing to Ontario taxpayers as a result of the $66 million which Premier Ford apparently gifted Staples, a U.S. corporation.

That communication follows for your convenience.

Mr. Bethlenfalvy, I and others working om this file have a keen interest in the contribution of the Minister of Finance to the Staples decision, and an especially keen interest in learning in full detail the methods and techniques used by you and your officials to evaluate the return-on-investment aspect of the decision.

Minister, please rest assured that your reply is awaited with great anticipation.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Dr. Barry Wellar, C.M.
Professor Emeritus, University of Ottawa
President, Information Research Board Inc.

312-1780 Russell Rd.
Ottawa, ON K1G4B1
CANADA
From: wellar.barry@gmail.com <wellar.barry@gmail.com>
Sent: October 1, 2026 9:04 PM
To: 'Premier of Ontario | Premier ministre de l'Ontario' <Premier@ontario.ca>
Cc: 'mark carney' <mark.carney@parl.gc.ca>; dominic.leblanc@parl.gc.ca; 'jenna sudds' <jenna.sudds@parl.gc.ca>; david.mcguinty@parl.gc.ca; 'Marit Stiles' <marit.stiles@ontariondp.ca>; JVanthof-QP@ndp.on.ca; jfraser.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org; tylerwatt.mpp.co@ola.org; premier@manitoba.ca; 'George A. Neville' <george.neville@ncf.ca>; 'George Lefebvre' <shasonje@gmail.com>; 'douglasarnold douglasarnold' <douglasarnold@sympatico.ca>; 'craig macaulay' <lvcarental@gmail.com>; 'Steve Larocque' <speaker.steve@northernontario.ca>; 'Gordon Brock' <gordon.e.brock@gmail.com>; wellar.barry@gmail.com; vic.fedeli@pc.ola.org; mike.harris@pc.ola.org; rob.flack@pc.ola.org
Subject: Letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do", (revised)

Dear Premier Doug Ford (and persons on the cc list),

Circumstances dictated that I send you the draft of the email communication titled Letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do", sent September 30, 7:55 PM.

Fortunately, I can prepare the final version in a timely manner, including several revisions which may be pertinent to your response.

My sincere apologies for any inconvenience my personal circumstances may cause you in providing your response.

Barry Wellar

Premier Ford,

I call to your attention a recent letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do", in which I am critical of your apparent decision to gift $66 million, that is, 66 million taxpayer dollars, to Staples, a U.S. corporation because, according to news stories I have heard or seen, Staples employs an unspecified number of Canadians.

The letter is attached for your convenience in the event that it has not already been made available to you via your communications or media clippings services, cabinet minister, MPPs, etc.

Premier Ford, by way of context for the letter to the editor and this communication, forty-six years ago I organized the Symposium on National and Regional Economic Development Strategies: Perspectives on Canada's Problems and Prospects.

A book of the same title was published to document the proceedings, and the book has been available for 45 years as of this writing.

In recognition of their significant contributions to Canadian discourse on national and regional economic development strategies, and the possibility that their names might "ring some bells" for your advisor(s), or anyone who participated in the apparent decision to gift Staples $66 million "in appreciation" (?) for unspecified jobs for unspecified Canadians at unspecified levels of remuneration, they are noted here in alphabetical order:

> Carl Beigie, Hugh Benham, Wayne Cheveldayoff, Tom Courchene, Albert Deschamps, Colin Hindle, David Hipgrave, Steven Hollett, Michael Jenkins, William McCarten, Don McGillivray, Robert Montreuil, David Sewell, Frank Swift, and Barry Wellar.

Premier Ford, with those proceedings and numerous other productions on economic development strategies taken into consideration, I am appalled at the publicly available flimsy and illogical reasoning behind the apparent decision to gift Staples the $66 million with no evidence that I have been able to locate which comprehensively describes the immediate and long-term returns on investment to taxpayers.

Premier Ford, I look forward to your detailed response to the letter to the editor and this communication.

Due to the significant political, geo-political, economic, financial, employment, business, entrepreneurial, sovereignty, and other consequences arising from the decision to gift Staples $66 million, please reply within 10 business days to facilitate the Board publishing its report in a timely manner.

Thank you.

Dr. Barry Wellar, C.M.
Professor Emeritus, University of Ottawa
President, Information Research Board Inc.
312-1780 Russell Rd.
Ottawa, ON K1G4B1

Comments on Exhibit 9

It seems probable that there are civil servants in the Ministry of Finance who have expertise and experience regarding the methods and techniques used to evaluate the return-on-investment aspect of all policy decisions and all pieces of legislation.

As a result, it seems to be a given that Minister Bethlenfalvy has a pool of talent upon which to call when reviewing the return(s) on investment arising from the gift of $66 million to Staples.

Further, according to an Ontario PC promotion blurb 'About Peter Bethlenfalvy'. (https://pickeringuxbridge.ontariopc.ca/about-peter-bethlenfalvy/), he is credited with a lengthy private sector track record in the business, finance, and investment domains.

In my experience his activities must have included direct or indirect use of methods and techniques to evaluate return-on-investment decisions involving multimillions of dollars.

As the reader may be aware, political party promos are generally regarded as "fluff pieces" designed to impress rather than inform citizens.

However, in the one-page bionote the terms 'business', 'finance', 'investment' and variations thereof are mentioned more than 15 times, so it is fair to presume that Bethlenfalvy knows what is being put out for all to see and is prepared to live up to the promotional blurb with his name on it.

It was therefore expected that Minister Bethlenfalvy would send a substantive reply explaining how, when, and where the $66 million payout to Staples would yield financial, economic, manufacturing, business stat-ups, employment, tax revenues, increased self-sufficiency, strengthened sovereignty, and other returns-on-investment to protect Ontario that most if not all politicians would rush to claim as an achievement.

However, no reply has been received from Minister Bethlenfalvy, and that result comes as no surprise because, as per our finding, the gift to Staples is a gift, pure and simple.

Or, to rephrase, there is no body of documentation on methods and techniques used to generate much less evaluate the gift of $66 million to Staples, a U.S. corporation.

Consequently, the gift to Staples makes a total mockery of Ford's bizarre notions that gifting taxpayer dollars to a U.S. corporation equates with "Buy Canadian" or somehow protects Ontario by giving away the school supplies fund to a foreign corporation.

No wonder, some might say, that Minister Bethlenfalv did not respond and ducked out of the way, leaving Ford to take the full hit for the Staples blunder.

The next section summarizes how the record of communications leads to the finding that the Ontario government's contract for $66 million with Staples, a U.S. corporation, is a gift of $66 million.

4. How the Record of Communications Establishes the Finding that the Ontario Government's Contract for $66 million with Staples, a U.S. corporation, is a gift of $66 million

A number of tests could have been performed by the Ontario government to demonstrate that the payout to Staples was not a gift.

The absence of evidence reporting on the application of tests, such as those listed in Table 1, is posited as sufficient grounds to affirm that Premier Ford, Finance Minister Bethlenfalvy, and other government interests, have no evidence-based argument to substantively challenge labelling the $66 million pay-out to Staple a gift of Ontario taxpayer money.

To recall an early statement about project scope, our focus in this report is return-on-investment, a test that both Ford and Bethlenfalvy failed.

However, based on the absence of evidence to find otherwise, they also failed all the other test domains in Table 1.

Therefore, based on the tests of whether the payout to Stapes a gift to Staples or an investment in Ontario and Canada is, it is obviously a gift to the U.S. retailer.

For the second contribution to the finding that Ford gifted Staples $66 million, we consider the exhortation "Buy Canadian" that Ford used to justify the Staples payout.

I encountered that phrase in a government setting multiple times in the 1970s while at the federal Ministry of State for Urban Affairs.

However, I do not recall, and searches of documents do not reveal any government at any level in the 1970s or since, that based a "Buy Canadian" message on Doug Ford's notion that a U.S. corporation which employs Canadians satisfies even the weakest "Buy Canadian" condition.

Literature searches did not reveal an explanation of Ford's notion, nor did he provide evidence to support his notion, which brings us to Table 2.

For more than 50 years, various bodies of literature including learned, popular, government, trade, public interest, private interest, research institute, and academic, have published thousands of reports on the sum and substance of the phrase "Buy Canadian".

Table 1. Examples of Tests the Government of Ontario Could Have Used to Demonstrate that the Payout of $66 Million to Staples, a U.S. Corporation, Is Not a Gift

Test Name
Accelerator effect tests
Community and economic readiness assessment tests
Comparative advantage tests
Economic multiplier effect tests
Economies of scale tests
Industrial spin-off tests
Manufacturing and innovation competitiveness tests
Opportunity cost tests
Regional impact assessment tests
Return on investment tests
Stage of economic growth tests
Take-up capacity tests

A selection of basic conditions which are widely used in "Buy Canadian" campaign and related initiatives are presented in Table 2 in questions about Ford's decision to retain Staples.

Table 2. Did Premier Ford Provide Evidence that Employment of Canadians by Staples Has Anything to with the Established Meaning of "Buy Canadian"?

Examples of evidence-based questions that point out why Doug Ford's notion that employing Canadians equates with 'Buy Canadian" is bizarre at best*****.

1. Does Ford present evidence that a preponderance of goods sold by Staples are products of Canada? No evidence was received from Ford or located.
2. Does Ford present evidence that a preponderance of services sold by Staples are products of Canada? No evidence was received from Ford or located.
3. Does Ford present evidence that a preponderance of the goods sold by Staples are made in Canada by Canadian firms? No evidence was received from Ford or located.

4. Does Ford present evidence that a preponderance of the services sold by Staples are made in Canada by Canadian firms? No evidence was received from Ford or located.
5. Does Ford present evidence that a preponderance of the goods sold by Staples are prepared in Canada by Canadian firms? No evidence was received from Ford or located.
6. Does Ford present evidence that a preponderance of the services sold by Staples are prepared in Canada by Canadian firms? No evidence was received from Ford or located.
7. Does Ford present evidence that any goods sold by Staples are made in Canada by Canadian firms? No evidence was received from Ford or located.
8. Does Ford present evidence that any services sold by Staples are prepared in Canada by Canadian firms? No evidence was received from Ford or located.
9. Does Ford provide evidence that value-added benefits accrue to Ontario or Canada from Canadians selling Staples' goods in Staples' stores in Canada? No value-added evidence was received from Ford or located.
10. Does Ford provide evidence that value-added benefits accrue to Ontario and Canada from Canadians selling Staples' services in Staples' stores in Canada? No value-added evidence was received from Ford or located.

***** The term "preponderance" is used to represent the reality that there are wide variations inf the degree of integration across sectors of the Canadian and U.S. economies. Hence, as a first approximation we start with preponderance with the hope that "the farm has not already been given away", and with the expectation that it will not be given away due to decisions that fail to protect Ontario or Canada.

These questions represent a small selection of the dozens of variables and sub-variables used to elaborate the meaning of "Buy Canadian".

In section 6, the question is raised as to whether politicians who did not challenge Ford on his statements equating jobs for Canadians at Staples with "Buy Canadian" agree with him.

And, if they do not agree, what questions would they ask to help citizens understand why Ford is blowing smoke with his notion about jobs in retail which he uses to justify gifting Staples $66 million this school year and who knows how much in future years?

The fact that Ford's employment notion does not meet any of the widely accepted "Buy Canadian" conditions in Table 2 and numerous other tables published over at least five decades, adds to confirming that the payout of $66 million was a gift to Staples and not an investment in Ontario or in Canada. (**13**)

The next two parts of section 4 summarize how gifting $66 million to Staples fails to protect Ontario and fails to protect Canada, respectively.

For openers, it is again emphasized that Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025, is Premier Doug Ford's legislation, but no production has been located or received in which he presents evidence that explains how a payout of $66 million to Staples, a U.S. corporation, protects Ontario by unleashing Ontario's economy.

Further, the same assessment applies to Finance Minister Bethlenfalvy.

Seemingly, it appears fair to say, the top-level political players in the Ontario government lack even a passing clue about the width, depth, and lasting nature of the anti-Ontario and anti-Canada blunder committed with the Staples payout.

Which causes me to hasten to state that the payout to Staples blunder cannot be fobbed off on such excuses as "It's all new", or "It's really complicated", or "We were in a rush" or "We get a headache when faced with needing to use or comprehend methodologically designed higher-order analytics".

In point of fact, Premier Ford, Minister Bethlenfalvy, and Ford's entire caucus had a heads-up from Harold Innis' writings of 100 years ago, when Innis made the pitch about Canadians stepping up as masters of their own house and getting past the mentality of enabling others to rule the "value-added roost". (**14**)

Therefore, the Staples deal is like countless other deals made over 100 years that are in Canada's record of lived experience, which takes us from the science-based way of knowing to the common sense way of knowing.

That is, the common sense way of knowing is based on experience, so it takes no more than rigorously applied common sense thinking to reject the notion that gifting Staples, s U.S. corporation, $66 million could in any way contribute to unleashing Ontario's economy and thereby protect Ontario.

From an Honourable Member perspective, therefore, it is the responsibility of Doug Ford to clean up the mess he caused by the bizarre Staples deal, but there is no sign that Ford will do the honourable thing.

As a result, Table 3 presents a selection of questions that perhaps citizens, the media, opposition MPPs, and others may find useful when challenging Ford to provide evidence that the Staples deal does not make a mockery of Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025.

And on and on could grow the list of evaluative questions, all of which should have been asked and answered by a body of competent analysts long before Ford, Bethlenfalvy, *et al,* irresponsibly gifted Staples $66 million for goods and services.

Indeed, given how long this "giving away the store" stuff has been experienced, by now commonsense thinking should have said loud and clear,

> "No! No! No! Spend Ontario money first on products and services of Ontario and Canada, and if that option is not available then spend tax dollars on Ontario-made and Canada-made school products and services, and if that option is not available then spend tax dollars on Ontario-prepared and Canada-prepared school products and services, rather than perpetuate the hewers and haulers mentality of 100 years by selling out Ontario and Canada to U.S. corporate interests." (**15**)

The next two parts of section 4 summarize how gifting $66 million to Staples fails to protect Ontario and fails to protect Canada, respectively.

Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025, is Premier Doug Ford's legislation, but no production has been located or received in which he presents evidence that explains how a pay-out of $66 million to Staples, a U.S. corporation, protects Ontario by unleashing Ontario's economy.

As for the protect Canada aspect, it appears fair to say that most if not everything written above about the failure of protecting Ontario by gifting Staples $66 million is applicable in every province and territory which retails Staple goods and services. And then some.

That is, with 300 brick-and-mortar properties in Canada, and a strong online presence, it bodes badly for the federal government if it becomes necessary or even just advisable to start showing the door to U.S. corporations that are threats to Canada's sovereignty, economy, culture, education, self-sufficiency, independence, labour force attachments, etc., etc.

Moreover, those who labelled Ford "Captain Canada" because he loudly proclaimed that "Canada is not for sale", should give their heads a vigorous shake because the decision to gift Staples $66 million instead of keeping that money in Canada is the kind of blowhard stunt which does this country far more harm than good.

Table 3. Questions for Doug Ford re Evidence that Gifting Staples $66 Million Contributes to Unleashing Ontario's Economy

1. How does gifting Staples $66 million for retail goods contribute to Ontario not falling into the hewers and haulers curse identified by Harold Innis 100 years ago?
2. How does gifting Staples $66 million for retail goods distribution contribute to Ontario not falling into the hewers and haulers curse identified by Harold Innis 100 years ago?
3. How does gifting Staples $66 million for retail services contribute to Ontario not falling into the hewers and haulers curse identified by Harold Innis 100 years ago?
4. How does gifting Staples $66 million for retail services distribution contribute to Ontario not falling into the hewers and haulers curse identified by Harold Innis 100 years ago?
5. How does gifting Staples $66 million for retail goods distribution contribute to unleashing Ontario's retail distribution network?
6. How does gifting Staples $66 million for retail services distribution contribute to unleashing Ontario's retail distribution network?
7. How does gifting Staples $66 million protect Ontario?
8. How does gifting Staples $66 million contribute to unleashing Ontario's economy?
9. How does gifting Staples $66 million protect Ontario's sovereignty?
10. How does gifting Staples $66 million contribute to diversifying Ontario's retail sector?
11. How does gifting Staples $66 million contribute to strengthening Ontario's retail sector?
12. How does gifting Staples $66 million contribute to increasing the competitiveness of Ontario's retail sector?
13. How does gifting Staples $66 million contribute to increasing Ontario manufacturers' share of the school goods market?
14. How does gifting Staples $66 million contribute to increasing Ontario manufacturers' share of the school services market?
15. How does gifting Staples $66 million contribute to increasing Canadian innovation in the school goods domain?
16. How does gifting Staples $66 million contribute to increasing Canadian innovation in the school services domain.

Recalling the words of Harold Innis, Ford's gifting Staples with his outdated hewers and haulers attitude sets a precedent for other provincial/territorial leaders to engage in similar

kinds of hewer-hauler deals instead of travelling the value-added road that benefits Canada and not a U.S. corporate entity.

And then just as we made plans to send this report for editing, proofing, and formatting, another breaking news story calls for consideration.

That is, media stories reveal that perhaps the Staples deal is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Doug Ford confirming that he really is a latter day hewer-and-hauler type of premier who has little to no understanding of the message from Harold Innis 100 years ago about taking care of business and not counting on foreign sources to cut you in for a generous share of value-added benefits. (**16**)

There is one more communication of record to critique, which is from the Ontario Classroom Supplies Fund Communications Team**,** Ministry of Education | Ontario Public Service.

This unsolicited communication from the Ministry of Education is examined in section 5.

Section 5. Examination of an Email Communication from the Ontario Classroom Supplies Fund Communications Team, Ministry of Education | Ontario Public Service

Three 'heads up' remarks are appropriate to put the email content in perspective.

First, no person is named as authoring the email, which is a recipe for sending citizens down the proverbial rabbit hole chasing after what could be and often is a diversion and/or resource-wasting tactic that is intended to wear out citizens and community groups.

Moreover, when questions arise and are sent to the "team", there is often much toing and froing and time-wasting about who if anyone answers the inquiry.

Further, this is a bureaucratic recipe for avoiding accountability.

As a result, we deal only with parts of the communication that are fully self-contained and do not require seeking clarifications, elaborations, or chasing after any member of the "team" who could well have changed jobs in the interim and no longer has any responsibility for this file.

Second, Information Research Board communications (letters to the editor and emails to Premier Ford and Minister Bertenfalvy) are limited in scope and specific in subject matter.

Parts of the "team" communication deemed outside the scope of IRB communications are regarded as bureaucratic piffle that could be orchestrated by someone in the minister's office and are not examined in this report.

Third, only one statement in this communication has anything to do with the report in progress.

That statement follows the "team" communication, and is **highlighted in bold red**.

Exhibit 10. Email communication from Ontario Classroom Supplies Fund Communications Team, Ministry of Education | Ontario Public Service, RE: Letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do" (revised)

From: Ontario Classroom Supplies Fund Communications (EDU) <classroomsuppliesfund@ontario.ca>
Sent: October 21, 2026 2:37 PM
To: wellar.barry@gmail.com
Subject: RE: Letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do", (revised)

Dear Dr. Wellar:

Thank you for writing regarding the selection of Staples Canada as the vendor for Ontario's Classroom Supplies Fund.

The Classroom Supplies Fund is intended to provide eligible elementary teachers with direct access to an annual spending amount of $750 for classroom supplies. It is not a lump-sum payment or gift to Staples Canada. Funding is provided to school boards to support eligible classrooms, and expenditures occur when teachers order supplies for their classrooms.

The procurement process was administered by Supply Ontario through an open competitive procurement process conducted in accordance with applicable procurement requirements and the principles of fairness, openness and transparency. All bidders were provided with consistent information and evaluated against the criteria outlined in the solicitation documents. Staples Canada was the successful vendor and provides the dedicated ordering website, account-administration services, order fulfilment and delivery to schools across Ontario.

This centralized model provides eligible teachers throughout the province with a consistent purchasing and delivery process. It also supports oversight of public funds by allowing purchases, account balances and order histories to be administered and monitored through

a common platform. Teachers must attest that purchases are for classroom use and that the supplies remain school property.

While the parent company of the successful vendor is headquartered in the United States, Staples Canada has a substantial Canadian presence and workforce, employing approximately 11,000 people across Ontario and Canada.

The value of the Fund is principally reflected in the classroom supplies and related services provided through it, including direct teacher access to materials, province-wide ordering and delivery, and reduced reliance on teachers paying out of pocket. The Ministry will continue to monitor implementation, including product selection, pricing, ordering patterns and delivery.

https://www.supplyontario.ca/information-and-privacy/

Thank you for taking the time to share your views.

Sincerely,

Ontario Classroom Supplies Fund Communications Team

Ministry of Education | Ontario Public Service

classroomsuppliesfund@ontario.ca

Ontario

Taking pride in strengthening Ontario, its places and its people

Please note: As part of providing accessible customer service, if you have any accommodation needs, require communication supports, or alternate formats please contact classroomsuppliesfund@ontario.ca.

From: wellar.barry@gmail.com <wellar.barry@gmail.com>
Sent: October 8, 2026 3:34 PM
To: Bethlenfalvy, Peter <peter.bethlenfalvy@pc.ola.org>; 'Premier of Ontario | Premier ministre de l'Ontario' <Premier@ontario.ca>
Cc: 'mark carney' <mark.carney@parl.gc.ca>; dominic.leblanc@parl.gc.ca; 'jenna sudds' <jenna.sudds@parl.gc.ca>; david.mcguinty@parl.gc.ca; 'Marit Stiles' <marit.stiles@ontariondp.ca>; JVanthof-QP@ndp.on.ca; jfraser.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org; tylerwatt.mpp.co@ola.org; premier@manitoba.ca; 'George A. Neville' <george.neville@ncf.ca>; 'George Lefebvre' <shasonje@gmail.com>; 'douglasarnold

douglasarnold' <douglasarnold@sympatico.ca>; 'craig macaulay' <lvcarental@gmail.com>; 'Steve Larocque' <speaker.steve@northernontario.ca>; 'Gordon Brock' <gordon.e.brock@gmail.com>; Fedeli, Vic <vic.fedeli@pc.ola.org>; Harris, Mike <mike.harris@pc.ola.org>; Flack, Rob <rob.flack@pc.ola.org>
Subject: RE: Letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do", (revised)

Dear Minister Bethlenfalvy,

It seems likely that as Minister of Finance you have already been informed of the communication to Premier Doug Ford regarding the Information Research Board's request to be informed of the 'return on investment' flowing to Ontario taxpayers as a result of the $66 million which Premier Ford apparently gifted Staples, a U.S. corporation.

That communication follows for your convenience.

Mr. Bethlenfalvy, I and others working on this file have a keen interest in the contribution of the Minister of Finance to the Staples decision, and an especially keen interest in learning in full detail the methods and techniques used by you and your officials to evaluate the return-on-investment aspect of the decision.

Minister, please rest assured that your reply is awaited with great anticipation

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Dr. Barry Wellar, C.M.
Professor Emeritus, University of Ottawa
President, Information Research Board Inc.
312-1780 Russell Rd.
Ottawa, ON K1G4B1
CANADA
https://wellar.ca/informationresearch/

From: wellar.barry@gmail.com <wellar.barry@gmail.com>
Sent: October 1, 2026 9:04 PM
To: 'Premier of Ontario | Premier ministre de l'Ontario' <Premier@ontario.ca>
Cc: 'mark carney' <mark.carney@parl.gc.ca>; dominic.leblanc@parl.gc.ca; 'jenna sudds' <jenna.sudds@parl.gc.ca>; david.mcguinty@parl.gc.ca; 'Marit Stiles' <marit.stiles@ontariondp.ca>; JVanthof-QP@ndp.on.ca; jfraser.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org; tylerwatt.mpp.co@ola.org; premier@manitoba.ca; 'George A. Neville' <george.neville@ncf.ca>; 'George Lefebvre' <shasonje@gmail.com>; 'douglasarnold douglasarnold' <douglasarnold@sympatico.ca>; 'craig macaulay' <lvcarental@gmail.com>; 'Steve Larocque' <speaker.steve@northernontario.ca>; 'Gordon Brock'

<gordon.e.brock@gmail.com>; wellar.barry@gmail.com; vic.fedeli@pc.ola.org; mike.harris@pc.ola.org; rob.flack@pc.ola.org
Subject: Letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do", (revised)

Dear Premier Doug Ford (and persons on the cc list).,

Circumstances dictated that I send you the draft of the email communication titled Letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do", sent September 30, 7:55 PM.

Fortunately, I can prepare the final version in a timely manner, including several revisions which may be pertinent to your response.

My sincere apologies for any inconvenience my personal circumstanced may cause you in providing your response.

Barry Wellar

Premier Ford,

I call to your attention a recent letter to the editor, Temiskaming Speaker, "Ford's message: shop as I say, not as I do", in which I am critical of your apparent decision to gift $66 million, that is, $66 million taxpayer dollars, to Staples, a U.S. corporation because, according to news stories I have heard or seen, Staples employs an unspecified number of Canadians.

The letter is attached for your convenience in the event that it has not already been made available to you via your communications or media clippings services, cabinet minister, MPPs, etc.

Premier Ford, by way of context for the letter to the editor and this communication, forty-six years ago I organized the Symposium on National and Regional Economic Development Strategies: Perspectives on Canada's Problems and Prospects.

A book of the same title was published to document the proceedings, and the book has been available for 45 years as of this writing.

In recognition of their significant contributions to Canadian discourse on national and regional economic development strategies, and the possibility that their names might "ring some bells" for your advisor(s), or anyone who participated in the apparent decision to gift Staples $66 million "in appreciation" (?) for unspecified jobs for unspecified Canadians at unspecified levels of remuneration, they are noted here in alphabetical order: Carl Beigie, Hugh Benham, Wayne Chaveldayoff, Tom Courchene, Albert Deschamps, Colin Hindle,

David Hipgrave, Steven Hollett, Michael Jenkins, William McCarten, Don McGillivray, Robert Montreuil, David Sewell, Frank Swift, and Barry Wellar.

Premier Ford, with those proceedings and numerous other productions on economic development strategies taken into consideration, I am appalled at the publicly available flimsy and illogical reasoning behind the apparent decision to gift Staples the $66 million with no evidence that I have been able to locate which comprehensively describes the immediate and long-term returns on investment to taxpayers.

Premier Ford, I look forward to your detailed response to the letter to the editor and this communication.

Due to the significant political, geo-political, economic, financial, employment, business, entrepreneurial, sovereignty, and other consequences arising from the decision to gift Staples $66 million, please reply within 10 business days to facilitate the Board publishing its report in a timely manner.

Thank you.

Dr. Barry Wellar, C.M.
Professor Emeritus, University of Ottawa
President, Information Research Board Inc.
312-1780 Russell Rd.
Ottawa, ON K1G4B1

Comments on Exhibit 10

One statement is pertinent to this report:

"Taking pride in strengthening Ontario, its places and its people."

However, its pertinence is not for reasons that are flattering to any member of the Ontario Classroom Supplies Fund Communications Team, to the Ministry of Education | Ontario Public Service, to Education Minister Paul Calandra, or to anyone else with a passing clue about why the Ontario Ministry of Education among all ministries is obliged to separate political bafflegab from evidence-based, verifiable truth.

Long story short is that this report is searching for evidence that the outlay of $66 million to Staples, a U.S. corporation, meets established "Buy Canadian" standards, or protects Ontario by unleashing Ontario's economy.

The finding is that no evidence has been located or received on either score, thereby making a mockery of the Ontario Ministry of Education sign-off claim, ***Taking pride in strengthening Ontario, its places and its people***.

That is, not one sentence in the "team" blurb contains any evidence, none whatsoever, that the decision to allocate taxpayer dollars to Staples, a U.S. corporation, contributes to ***"strengthening Ontario, its places and its people"***.

Or, to rephrase, it appears fair to say that when it comes to improvement of thinking skills, Education Minister Calandra would be well advised to seek guidance on how to better attend to his own office and agency given the flawed logic behind the Staples blunder.

And, worse, by attempting to defend the blunder, the "team" seemingly acknowledges that it does not know the difference between rhetoric and reality when it uses an empty sloganeering sign-off to wrap up a communication on behalf of the Ministry of Education.

6. Questions that Arise from Citizens about Response of Politicians to Research on Ford's Gift of $66 Million to Staples

A number of politicians are on the cc list of communications to Doug Ford about the Staples deal, and/or are primary recipients of communications regarding the Ford-Staples deal.

Citizens who have access to those communications, and/or access to publicly available productions regarding the deal, have questions about whether communications were received from politicians on the cc lists, and/or are primary recipients of communications, regarding the deal.

The overriding concern of citizens is that politicians who remain silent on this matter are complicit in "selling out" Ontario and Canada to U.S. corporate interests instead of protecting Ontario and Canada.

That is an important and pertinent question which the Information Research Board will consider adding to its program.

As a result, a preliminary assessment step will be taken when this report is posted.

A selection of politicians will be directed to Section 6 and asked several questions that follow from an examination of citizens' comments about the lines of inquiry in this report and previous IRB productions.

7. Conclusion

The research question is whether Doug Ford's Gift of $66 Million to Staples protects Ontario and Canada and, if so, how is that achieved?

The answer to that question is expressed by the report title, **Finding: Doug Ford's Gift of $66 Million to Staples Fails to Protect Ontario or Canada**, and the reasons are as follows.

First, Premier Ford's claim that because Staples employs Canadians, it meets his standard of "Buy Canadian", makes a mockery of his own legislation test which is administered by Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025.

As shown, gifting a U.S. corporation public funds not only causes a leakage of funds from Ontario and Canada, but it diminishes the multiplier, accelerator, spin-off, and other effects that come with Ontario having a homegrown and robust, education goods industry, education services industry, and education goods and services distribution and delivery systems.

Second, Ford's decision to fund Staples puts him in the class of previous backward-thinking politicians who, as characterized by Harold Innis, created a Canada of hewers and haulers who seemingly had no clue that a sound economy reaps the value-added benefits of economic activities and is not resigned to doing the "grunt work" while those from other countries turn that grunt work into "big bucks".

Third, gifting $66 million to Staples not only drains money out of Ontario and Canada, but it sends a message to U.S. corporate types and U.S politicians that Ontario is ripe for plucking due to Ford's ideological bias in favour of gifting Ontario taxpayer dollars to the U.S. private sector for goods, services, and the distribution and delivery of goods and services rather than investing in Ontario's public sector, or a mix of Ontario's public and private sectors.

Fourth, there is no sign that Ford has any kind of grasp of the concept of value-added, much less evidence in that regard, which renders Bill 5 a political puff piece that bizarrely speaks to unleashing the Ontario economy while gifting $66 million to Staples, a U.S. corporation.

Fifth, requests to Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy for evidence about the value-added benefits to Ontario and Canada of gifting $66 million to Staples came up empty.

As a result, until evidence to the contrary is received, it is taken that no such evidence exists and the deal is reasonably termed a blunder.

Sixth, the Ontario Classroom Supplies Fund Communications Team, was presumably sent by Education Minister Paul Calandra to bail out Ford.

Some bail-out.

The team provided a statement which has nothing to do with "Buy Canadian" or Bill 5.

Moreover, in a communication attempting to justify a contract with Staples, a U.S. corporation, the Team posted the email on Ministry of Education stationery with the sign-off slogan, ***Taking pride in strengthening Ontario, its places and its people***.

Seriously?

Finally, two summary observations.

First, Doug Ford's gift of $66 Million to Staples fails to protect Ontario's, Canada's, and Canadians' sovereignty, autonomy, independence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-worth, and other measures of personal and national well-being that warrant protection by politicians at all levels to ensure Canada remains a free and democratic society.

Second, Ford's gift to Staples does damage to the perceptions of Canadians and others about the present and future state of Ontario's, Canada's, and Canadians' sovereignty, autonomy, independence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-worth, and other measures of personal and national well-being that warrant protection by politicians at all levels to ensure Canada remains a free and democratic society.

8. Endnotes

1. Reports critical of governments for failing to properly inform citizens by, for example, making information and records searches in general extremely difficult, shielding politicians from accountability and transparency standards that serve citizens, avoiding conditions such as free, easy, timely, and direct online access to public records, and underfunding access to records agencies and ministry units include: *Chronicling the Use of Transparency and Accountability as Political Buzzwords, and as Drivers Ensuring the Standard of Access to Public Records in Canada is Best Practice*; Interim Report 4. Responses of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Selected Cabinet Ministers, and MP Arya Chandra (Lib.- Nepean) to the Question: Do You Agree that Citizens are Entitled to Free, Easy, Timely, and Direct Online Access to the Public Records Held by the Government of Canada?; Interim Report 6. Responses of Ontario Premier Doug Ford and Selected Cabinet Ministers to the Question: Do You Agree that Citizens Are Entitled to Free, Easy, Timely, and Direct Online Access to the Public Records Held by Municipal Governments in Ontario?; Interim Report 14. Asking the Question: Is Freedom of Information Legislation a Citizens' Conduit to Public Records, or an Institutional Barrier to Public Records?; Interim Report 15. Identifying Tactics Used by Politicians to Restrict Citizens' Access to Public Records; Interim Report 24. Survey Says Citizens Should Ask MPs Hard Questions About the Access to Information Act (ATIA) Review Process.

2. Bill 5 has been decried as a "mushy" piece of legislation which is overloaded with ideological bias, but whether that description is accurate is of secondary interest in this report. Rather, our focus is on the provincial government's outlay of $66 million to retain Staples, a U.S. corporation, and that outlay is examined in this report from the perspectives of the research methodology used to obtain evidence to justify the decision, and the presence of measurable demonstrations of the actual regard for citizens as opposed to pandering to self-serving politicians and vested interests.

3. Rather than list dozens of documents to establish this point, we use the reverse onus approach that shifts the burden of proof to the Ontario government. (Over the next year IRB will tend to other governments)

In the Ontario case, we invite Doug Ford, Peter Bethlenfalvy, Paul Calandra, and all other ministers to commit to providing links to the research methodology details that were publicly communicated to citizens regarding policy choices during this term of office.

In return, upon receipt of said links within 90 days of notifying ministers of the posting of this report, IRB commits to publishing a report on materials received within 365 days of sending notifications of the posting.

4. Doug Ford can counter the comment that he hid under a cone of silence by demonstrating otherwise, and that can be expeditiously done by showing proof of actions taken to provide citizens full, free, easy, timely, and direct online access to government records on this file.

5. When Doug Ford took a handful of his political team to Texas to purportedly seek investment funds, many social media and a number of broadcast media commentators referred to the $100,000 excursion as a diversion from the Staple's blunder, and a frolic on the taxpayer's dime.

Other analysts saw the quest for money as a contradiction of Bill 5, and a contradiction of the broader efforts to promote Canada by reducing the U.S. role in Canada's geo-politics and geo-economy. As of this writing, no information has been found explaining exactly how much funding was sought, the sources and purposes of the funding, and how Bill 5 was to be served by funding from a U.S. source or sources inTexas.

6. We return to this topic in section 5 when examining the communication from the Ontario Classroom Supplies Fund Communications Team, Ministry of Education, and its lockstep comment about using the FOI application route to obtain access to materials which are the property of the people of Ontario and not the current Government of Ontario which is merely the current transient custodian of those records.

7. Links to IRB reports discussing code of silence and cone of silence include: Interim Report 17. Using Transparency and Accountability as Political Buzzwords, and as Drivers Ensuring Access to Public Records in Canada is Best Practice: Ottawa Council Rating after the Third Citizen Access Survey–Political Buzzwords, 79%; Drivers, 21%; Interim Report 18. Invoking the Code of Conduct to Publicly Oblige City of Ottawa Politicians to Demonstrate Due Regard for Transparency and Accountability; Interim Report 19. Nomination for the 2020 Code of Silence Award: City of Ottawa Supporting Evidence – Reports from the Pilot Study Chronicling the Use of Transparency and Accountability as Political Buzzwords, and as Drivers Ensuring the Standard of Access to Public Records in Canada is Best Practice; Interim Report 20. Nomination for the 2020 Code of Silence Award: City of Ottawa Supporting Evidence – Communications to Mayor and Councillors that Received 'The Silent Treatment'; Interim Report 21. Nomination for the 2020 Code of Silence Award: City of Ottawa Supporting Evidence – Media Stories That Indicate a Code of Silence Has Been Adopted by Members of Council; Interim Report 22. City of Ottawa Mayor and Councillors, 2022-2026: Do You Agree that Citizens Are Entitled to Free, Easy, Timely, and Direct Online Access to the Public Records Held by the City of Ottawa? Survey #1; Interim Report 23. Analysis and Implications of Survey #1, City of Ottawa Mayor and Councillors, 2022-2026: Do You Agree that Citizens Are Entitled to Free, Easy, Timely, and Direct Online Access to the Public Records Held by the City of Ottawa?

8. This is an appropriate place to lay bare the unfounded and some say ridiculous claim by the Ford government about ads and other promotional materials being paid for by the Government of Ontario, an amount which is already exceeding $150 million in 2026. Truth told, the Government of Ontario has no money, not one cent, and is spending taxpayer dollars to cover every government expenditure, including the gift of $66 million to Staples, a U.S. corporation.

9. The "cone of silence" description is not widely used by social media or broadcast media commentators, but it has proven to be very effective with citizens. Based on feedback, many of them have experienced non-responses by politicians such as Doug Ford and his ministers who take the "fob off" route by sending communications to staff with instructions to reply and say nothing of import, or who say nothing substantive about anything that could lead to accountability talk and bring the Auditor-General and/or the Information Commissioner into the picture.

10. While Doug Ford and members of his Cabinet claim to have highest regard for accountability, that claim is a fraud in my experience involving dozens of emails in this Ford term and previous Ford terms which are deep-sixed by using the automatic reply gimmick to avoid engaging.

11. It is quite possible that Doug Ford has little or no understanding of the fundamentals of accountability in the public domain and just uses the term to create a sense of knowing. In a

related vein, he also uses the term "gridlock" with seeming expertise, experience, and authority, even though repeated requests to him and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation for evidence of even one gridlock event in the history of Canada have come to nought. IRB reports critiquing Ford's evidence-deprived claims about gridlock include: There Is No Apparent Evidence of Gridlock to Justify Spending $50 Billion to $90 Billion (est.) on a Tunnel Under Highway 401 in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA); Applying Universal Law of Location as a Transportation Planning Decision Tool: Ontario Government Data and Evidence Fail to Support Positions on Gridlock, Congestion, and Removal of Bike Lanes.

12. See, for example, Results of Request to Premier Doug Ford and 11 Cabinet Ministers for Evidence of Action Taken to Protect Ontario's Farmland Inventory and Food Security; Applying Universal Law of Location as a Transportation Planning Decision Tool: Ontario Government Data and Evidence Fail to Support Positions on Gridlock, Congestion, and Removal of Bike Lanes; Applying Universal Law of Location as a; Land Use Planning Decision Tool: Ontario Government Data, Evidence, and Research Studies Must be Upgraded to Enable Informed Decisions that Best Use and Preserve the Province's Threatened Farmland Inventory; There Is No Apparent Evidence of Gridlock to Justify Spending $50 Billion to $90 Billion (est.) on a Tunnel Under Highway 401 in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

13. For many years buying "Canadian" goods or services meant, by way of illustration, that 100% of an item such as a box of matches was produced in Canadian plants by Canadian workers using ingredients grown in Canada, extracted in Canada, processed in Canada, etc. The term 'preponderance' is used here in an indicative sense because the prospect of regularly and routinely buying 100% Canadian goods or service is long, long gone in the diversified merchandising sector. However, Doug Ford's notion that employing Canadians in a U.S. retail chain equates with the general sense of "Buy Canadian" has not been encountered in literature searches. That said, no evidence of any kind has been located or received that informs citizens as to what Ford meant when he uttered the comment that Staples is somehow "Buying Canadian" by employing Canadians in is retail stores in Canada.

14. Harold Innis published numerous works as part of his staples thesis/theory research and planted the seeds of the value-added concept which emphasized the increased value of natural resources (fur, timber, fish, minerals, etc.) that comes with moving those resources towards or to the finished product stage. The concept of value-added has expanded over the years to extend beyond natural resources, with perhaps the fast-paced upgrades in computer/communications technologies being among the most widely known examples of industries achieving value-added benefits.

Citizens who experience the mobile phone upgrade cycle, for example, are frequently exposed to the value-added concept which is embedded in many, most and, in some cases, it seems, each and every product line change.

15. According to many broadcast and social media comments, the Ford government has privatized aspects of a number of Ontario government agencies. However, none of those privatization initiatives appear to be as contradictory to Bill 5 and, for that matter as perversely illogical, than the decision to gift $66 million to a U.S. corporation.

16. This breaking news story discusses the cost of the trip to Texas by Ford and friends and fortuitously includes a briefing statement of sorts from the premier's office.

That is, in this piece by The Trillium (https://www.thetrillium.ca/) titled Premier Ford's chartered flights for spring Texas trip cost over $105,000 (https://www.thetrillium.ca/insider-news/politics/premier-fords-chartered-flights-for-spring-texas-trip-cost-over-105000-130034040), there is a comment very pertinent to this report.

According to the article we are told that 'Premier's office says the trip laid the groundwork for billions of dollars of new investment, more good-paying jobs, and stronger economic ties between Ontario and the U.S.'.

And there we have it, *déjà vu* all over again, as Ford once again confirms a paraphrased adage that those who refuse to learn or lack the wits to learn the lessons of history are bound to repeat them.

9. Acknowledgements

With much appreciation thanks are given to:

• Craig MacAulay for proofreading assistance.

• Sam Herold, a University of Ottawa alumnus and one of my former students (Geography, Environmental Studies, and Geomatics) who made valuable contributions to this report through his text formatting, graphic design, and technical assistance.