Environment laws rigged

A developer in north Kanata wants to develop land; no surprise there.

What's surprising is the process, because it turns out the developer – KNL Developments Inc. – can destroy the habitat of protected species, and even kill any of that species present, as long as the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is satisfied that KNL will somehow provide a final outcome that benefits the protected species.

That could mean other land is set aside for the rare Blanding's turtles, and that butternut tree seeds are collected and spread elsewhere.

If approved, KNL will bulldoze the land, cut down trees and blast into the bedrock for new pipes and wires.

It's hard to see how running over protected turtles with bulldozers or chopping down rare trees could end up benefiting said flat turtles and dead trees, but that's how the system works. Those are the laws our elected representatives at Queen's Park have enacted on our behalf. We are told we should be satisfied.

The public has a chance to provide comments, but bizarrely does not get to know what KNL will do in return for killing protected species. The developer need only provide ideas of what it might do.

In a sick version of Let's Make a Deal, the contestants (the public) can ask to keep what they have (rare turtles, trees etc.) or choose Door Number 1, all without any certainty of what they're trading for.

On the game show someone wins a car or gets a gag gift. What Natural Resources and Forestry offers is the status quo or possibly dead stuff and some kind of mitigation elsewhere.

No sane person could favour the latter option. And no one at all could make an informed decision without all the facts. The public is being asked to comment, but those comments are clearly not valued, not even worth the paper they're printed on.

The process is flawed. The system doesn't work. It's up to our elected representatives to fix it or we can all play Let's Make a Change when the next election is called.