



COUNCIL INFORMATION PACKAGE

Friday, December 12, 2025

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December 5, 2025
SENT ELECTRONICALLY

3350 Merrittville Hwy. Unit 9
Thorold Ontario L2V 4Y6
905.788.3135 | info@npca.ca | npca.ca

RE: NPCA Position on the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities

Please be advised that at the NPCA's Special Meeting held on December 5, 2025, the following resolution was passed:

Resolution No. FA-131-2025

Moved by: Stew Beattie

Seconded by: Brian Grant

WHEREAS the municipalities of the Niagara Peninsula watershed agreed to form the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority in 1959 under the *Conservation Authorities Act* to protect people, property, farmland and natural resources through watershed-based decision making informed by local science and knowledge, and municipal representation;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Government has amended the *Conservation Authorities Act* through Bill 68 "Plan to Protect Ontario (Budget Measures)" that allows for establishing the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to oversee the transition to Regional Conservation Authorities, and direct the strategic direction, finances, and operational activities of the new Regional Conservation Authorities, imposing additional costs on municipalities to fund the Agency via fees levied on the new Regional Conservation Authority;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks has posted Environmental Registry Notice No. 025-1257 ("Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities"), proposing to reduce Ontario's 36 conservation authorities to 7 regional entities as part of a broader restructuring;

AND WHEREAS under this proposal, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority would be consolidated into a new "Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority" together with the Hamilton Conservation Authority, Halton Region Conservation Authority and Credit Valley Conservation, forming a single organization extending along the western Lake Ontario shoreline from Niagara through Halton and Peel, encompassing urban and rural watershed that support the Greater Toronto-Hamilton corridor;

AND WHEREAS the proposed "Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority" is to span approximately 4,900 square kilometres and serve 28 municipalities comprised of nearly 2 million people, thereby risking local representation and the delivery of locally-focused programs and services;

AND WHEREAS the participating municipalities lying within NPCA's jurisdiction fund approximately 52% of the annual operating budget of NPCA through municipal levies, compared to the annual provincial transfer payment of approximately 0.5%;

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AND WHEREAS in September 2018, the Auditor General of Ontario published their report on the Special Audit of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, with 20 recommendations to the conservation authority and 4 recommendations to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to improve governance, operations, policies and processes to strengthen the delivery of programs and services, which have been fully implemented by Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, who is committed to continuous improvement;

AND WHEREAS NPCA has consistently met provincial permitting review standards 96% of the time;

AND WHEREAS watershed municipalities benefit from having conservation authority staff available locally that know our watersheds, municipal staff, communities, Indigenous community representatives, developers, consultants, and environmental non-government agencies;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved:

THAT the NPCA Board of Directors (“the Board”) does not support the proposed “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257 as the proposal lacks sufficient justification, would significantly diminish local governance, and fails to recognize the effectiveness and efficiencies already achieved within existing watershed-based models; and

AND THAT the Board affirms that large-scale regional consolidation is unnecessary, would introduce substantial transition costs, and would divert resources away from frontline watershed programs.

AND THAT the Board further asserts that restructuring at this scale would erode local decision-making, weaken municipal accountability, and disrupt long-standing community partnerships that are central to delivering responsive watershed management;

AND THAT the Board urges the Province to strengthen centralized standards, resources, and communication rather than undertaking broad structural amalgamation and to provide sustainable, predictable provincial funding across conservation authorities—particularly where gaps exist—to enable local conservation authorities to advance ongoing digitization and systemization work that has already resulted in improved efficiency and consistency in recent years;

AND THAT the Board requests that the Ministry engage meaningfully and collaboratively with affected municipalities, conservation authorities, and local First Nations before advancing any consolidation, to ensure that any changes reflect both local needs and the practical realities of implementation;

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AND THAT the Board believes that the Province's proposed new online permitting portal can be implemented within the existing conservation authority framework without requiring structural amalgamation;

AND THAT this resolution be included as part of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation submission to the Environmental Registry of Ontario and forwarded to Niagara Region, the lower-tier municipalities within Niagara Region, City of Hamilton, Haldimand County, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Committee, Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Conservation Ontario, local area MPPs, and all Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

CARRIED

A copy of the submission for NPCA Comments on ERO #025-1257 has been attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,



Melanie Davis
Manager, Office of the CAO & Board
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

cc: Leilani Lee-Yates, Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

December 5, 2025

Public Input Coordinator
MECP Conservation and Source Protection Branch
300 Water Street North Tower, 5th Floor
Peterborough, ON
K9J 3C7
Canada

Sent Via Email: ca.office@ontario.ca

RE: Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Comments on ERO #025-1257 – Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed boundaries and criteria for the regional consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities (CAs). On Nov. 27, 2025, Bill 68, *Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 (No.2)* received Royal Assent and the amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* allow for the establishment of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA). It is our understanding the OPCPA is intended to:

- Streamline and standardize service delivery by setting clear, province-wide performance standards;
- Support the consistent application of provincial standards for assessing, managing and mitigating flood risks across Ontario, including managing centralized data, updated floodplain mapping and overseeing improved maintenance of CA-managed infrastructure like dams, to manage flood and other natural hazards;
- Develop a single, digital permitting platform to provide a faster, more predictable approvals process and improved customer service, while maintaining high environmental standards;
- Develop clear performance goals of CAs to report on annually to support continuous improvements; and
- Oversee the implementation of a regional watershed-based consolidation of CAs, following consultation with the public, municipalities, and other partners including Indigenous communities.

Further, on November 7, 2025, the Province posted a policy proposal to consolidate Ontario’s 36 CAs into seven Regional Conservation Authorities (RCAs) on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) and is seeking feedback on proposed boundaries and the criteria applied to inform the proposed boundaries, with a deadline of December 22, 2025. The seven proposed RCAs are Lake Erie RCA, Huron-Superior RCA, Western Lake Ontario RCA, Central Lake Ontario RCA, Eastern Lake Ontario RCA, St. Lawrence RCA, and Northeastern Ontario RCA.

Under this proposal, NPCA would fall under the Western Lake Ontario RCA, along with Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA), Conservation Halton (CH) and Credit Valley Conservation (CVC). The boundaries of the Western Lake Ontario RCA extend along the western Lake Ontario shoreline from Niagara through Halton and Peel, encompassing urban and rural watersheds that support the Greater Toronto-Hamilton corridor. The RCA is primarily based on the western portion of the Northern Lake Ontario and Niagara River Secondary Watershed.

The proposed Western Lake Ontario RCA would also include the Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Area, Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region and Credit Valley Source Protection Area (which belongs to the Credit Valley – Toronto and Region – Central Lake Ontario Source Protection Region).

NPCA staff and Board of Directors appreciate the engagement sessions organized by Todd McCarthy, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Hassaan Basit, Chief Conservation Executive, and MECP staff to provide further information on the provincial proposal and role of OPCA. NPCA senior leadership has engaged with NPCA and municipal staff and reached out to Indigenous partners (Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN), Six Nations of the Grand River, and Niagara Region Métis Council) to inform them of the provincial proposal and how we may continue to work together during any transition process. NPCA was circulated comments prepared by MCFN staff, dated Dec. 1, 2025, and we agree with and support their comments and concerns.

While we support the proposed provincial investments in technology, standardization and modernization, the proposed RCA framework would create complexities and risks to local municipal representation and decision-making, local expertise, and delivery of programs and services. Given the proposed criteria and boundaries for the RCAs and the uncertainties and risks associated with the proposal, the NPCA does not support the proposed RCA framework. Comments and concerns related to the proposal are highlighted below. Detailed responses to the questions included in the ERO posting are provided in Appendix I. NPCA Board of Directors Resolution FA-131-2025 is appended as Appendix II.

Justification for a Regional Conservation Authority Framework

While it is understood that OPCA and the proposed RCA framework are intended to help get shovels in the ground faster on building homes and other local infrastructure projects while strengthening the vital role CAs play in managing watersheds and protecting communities from floods and natural hazards, CAs have not benefited from reviewing any assessments or analyses that have determined the need to restructure Ontario's current CA framework. With the various amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the standardization of regulated areas and development permit requirements through *Ontario Regulation 41/24*, CAs have been responsive to implement legislative changes and improve policies and processes through a coordinated approach.

For the NPCA and stemming from the 2018 Auditor General of Ontario report of the NPCA, we have undertaken tremendous work over the last several years to improve our governance, operations, policies and processes to strengthen the delivery of programs and services. NPCA has implemented all 20 recommendations within the Auditor General report and is focused on continuous improvements through updating planning and permitting policies, updating corporate policies, developing new guiding strategies, enhancing procedures, and implementing other modernization initiatives, including investments in software and data management. We have set an example for how CAs can implement best management practices and we remain committed to improving the delivery of our programs and services for the health and well-being of our local watersheds and communities.

Currently, NPCA is meeting provincial government set timelines for issuing development permits 96% of the time and continues to coordinate with municipal partners and developers while taking a solutions-focused approach to improving service delivery. We have invested in a permit management system, CityView, and will soon launch an online portal for permit submissions and tracking. We have also been investing in creating new and updated floodplain mapping as well as maintaining our online regulation mapping and open data

portal. For NPCA, it would be more beneficial to have clearer goals and guidelines that are evidence-based to drive further modernization and streamlining than restructure the CA framework. With the current CA framework in place, OPCA could provide added value by coordinating future enhancements across the CAs.

Governance of Regional Conservation Authorities

The proposed Western Lake Ontario RCA would cover approximately 490,000 ha of land and a population of nearly two million people. The new regional watershed-based boundaries would include portions of five upper-tier municipalities (Niagara, Halton, Peel, Dufferin and Wellington), three single-tier municipalities (Hamilton, Haldimand, and Toronto), and 25 lower-tier municipalities. Currently, the four governing Boards of Directors include a total of 53 members. While all four CAs offer similar watershed-based programs and services, they are scaled to unique local community needs and watershed management objectives.

The Niagara Peninsula watershed alone spans over 242,000 ha of land, includes 15 municipalities with approximately 480,000 residents. The watershed encompasses approximately 90 km of the Lake Erie shoreline, approximately 50 km of the Lake Ontario shoreline, the Niagara River, portions of the Niagara Escarpment, and the northernmost range of the Carolinian Life Zone. The Welland Canal supports cargo shipping between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, bypassing the Niagara Escarpment and Niagara Falls.

There are nearly 5,000 km of watercourses in NPCA's watershed jurisdiction that are part of three major drainage basins: Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, and the Niagara River. Numerous streams, rivers, and creeks, such as Twelve Mile Creek and Twenty Mile Creek, flow into Lake Ontario, while the Welland River and other tributaries drain into the Niagara River, a critical waterway connecting the two Great Lakes. The Lake Erie basin includes the southern portion of the watershed, with its own network of smaller streams and wetlands. Together, these interconnected water systems form the hydrological foundation of NPCA's jurisdiction.

In general comparison to the three other CAs within the proposed Western Lake Ontario RCA, the NPCA has the largest watershed jurisdiction with the least number of staff, and smallest operating budget. In terms of land holdings, NPCA and CVC have a similar size of CA-owned lands, followed by CH and then HCA with the largest land holdings. With the two Great Lakes Shorelines, the NPCA jurisdiction represents the largest length of coastal shorelines and communities.

For the Western Lake Ontario RCA, going from the current combined oversight of 53 Board representatives to anything less will be challenging and risks losing diverse voices at the table. It is difficult to understand how the RCA Board would result in more efficient decision-making with less costs incurred by funding municipalities. Further, the functional separation from local communities risks the 70-80 years of relationships and trust that have been built up in each CA watershed.

Consolidation of Assets and Liabilities

Each CA is an independent corporate entity that manages its own budgets, expenditures, reserves, infrastructure and landholdings. Further, each CA within the proposed Western Lake Ontario RCA has its own Foundation, which are also independent corporate entities with the focused mandates of raising funds for the projects and programs of their CAs.

As independent corporations, the four CAs within the Western Lake Ontario RCA have their own internal financial processes and systems, contracts with banking institutions for financial and investment services, and financial assets and liabilities (e.g. debt servicing). The process to consolidate assets and liabilities of the four CAs and their Foundations would be complex and lengthy. A cost-benefit analysis and legal review of such a merger should be completed before any consideration of implementing an RCA framework.

Amalgamating landownership and land management will be equally complex. Legal instruments such as land titles, surveys, easement agreements, etc. will need to be reviewed in detail, and the costs and legal implications assessed prior to any CA consolidation.

Further, CAs are actively increasing self-generated revenues through sources such as user-fees, plan review and permit fees, facility rentals, annual park passes, camping, and external grant funding to decrease reliance on municipal levies. Operating and Capital Budgets to deliver watershed programs and services are established based on the performance of self-generated revenues. Should the Provincial Government move forward with an RCA framework, any self-generated revenues, municipal levies and financial assets must be committed to the jurisdiction from which they were collected.

Costs to Regional Conservation Authorities and Municipalities

NPCA is concerned that the proposed RCA framework will result in increased costs incurred by the RCAs and their municipal funding partners. The OPCA funding model allows a provincial agency to charge back fees to RCAs for providing support services to implement agency directives and can cost apportion operating costs to RCAs. Before the OPCA is established, a cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken to demonstrate that there will be no increased costs incurred by CAs and their funding municipalities and specify the value-added services of the Agency.

Costs associated with consolidation would include without limitation, legal services, harmonizing HR systems and policies, harmonizing salaries and benefits, integrating IT and GIS services, harmonizing services and delivery processes, equipment and facility upgrades, communications and marketing, additional debt service to cover costs, and increased levies. While some costs would be one-time transition related costs, others will be ongoing costs to maintain operations and infrastructure of the larger corporation.

The participating municipalities within NPCA's jurisdiction (Niagara, Hamilton and Haldimand) fund approximately 52% of the annual operating budget of NPCA through municipal levies, compared to the annual s. 39 natural hazard provincial transfer payment of approximately 0.5%. The remaining revenues are obtained through self-generated program revenues (27%), federal grant funding (6.5%), provincially funded programs such as Drinking Water Source Protection Program and the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan (3%), and other sources through cost-sharing programs and fundraising efforts (11%). NPCA's increased self-generated revenue efforts has resulted in a decreased reliance on municipal contributions since 2021. NPCA's ability to generate additional revenues or increase dependence on municipal levies to cover costs incurred resulting from the transition to an RCA framework will be very limited and resources would be diverted away from front-line natural hazard and watershed management programs that support local communities.

As noted, we support and welcome renewed provincial investment in CAs to enhance process improvements, IT transformations and modernization efforts. It is recommended that the province immediately reassess the s. 39 natural hazard transfer payments to provide sustainable, predictable provincial funding across conservation

authorities—particularly where gaps exist—to enable local CAs to advance ongoing digitization and systemization work that has already resulted in improved efficiency and consistency in recent years.

Risks to Delivery of Local Watershed Programs and Services

With the additional administrative oversight of the OPCA, RCA Boards representing larger and more diverse communities and potentially complex budgeting processes, there is a serious concern that our dedicated expert staff will be unable to deliver the same quality of programs and services that our communities expect. The NPCA recommends that the province pause any further implementation of OPCA and consideration of an RCA framework, and instead assess the use of legislative, regulatory and incentive tools that are already available to achieve the desired standardization and modernization of CAs.

Should the Province decide to move forward with the RCA framework, it will be imperative that existing staff complements be maintained, and RCAs can fill roles that will enable the continuation of current programs and services, to ensure continuity of front-line services without disruption, including commitments under agreements with our member municipalities. It is worth noting that the NPCA is a unionized work environment. The Collective Agreement between the NPCA and OPSEU Local 212 expires at the end of 2025 and bargaining is expected to begin in the Spring of 2026.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in discussions with the Minister, Chief Conservation Executive, and MECP staff and provide constructive input to ensure that any future framework continues to address the unique needs of our watersheds and achieves an effective balance between watershed protection and housing goals.

Should further amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and related regulations to implement OPCA and the RCAs be proposed, we would welcome the opportunity to provide further comments related to policy reform.

Sincerely,



John Metcalfe
Chair, NPCA Board of Directors



Leilani Lee-Yates, BES, MSPL.RPD, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

What do you see as key factors to support a successful transition and outcome of regional conservation authority consolidation?

Theme	Comments
Preserve and Promote Local Institutional Knowledge	<p>A transitional framework that incorporates and promotes the involvement of CA front-line staff is essential to ensure localized expertise and input is built-in from the beginning. To maintain and enhance service delivery there must not be any job losses during and post-transition to an RCA framework.</p> <p>Position needs and skills may be specific in each CA based on the local watershed objectives, and as such, the mandate for the structure and/or design of roles must be maintained at the local CA level.</p>
Preserve Municipal Governance and Decision-Making	<p>Consolidation of CAs poses risks to local, grassroots initiatives, it is imperative that local presence is maintained and strengthened to keep our communities informed throughout transitional phases.</p> <p>To further preserve local decision-making, transparency and clear delineations of authority of the OPCA and RCAs need to be established and communicated effectively.</p>
Phasing Transitional Periods with a focus on Standardization before Amalgamations	<p>Many areas of focus proposed for the OPCA (i.e. province-wide permitting platform and digital innovations) are initiatives that could be established across conservation authorities under their current structures.</p> <p>Software and standard processes can be CA lead and be prioritized, followed by amalgamations with existing local CA Boards in place to oversee their own amalgamations.</p> <p>Preventing transformation saturation will ensure these priority initiatives are implemented efficiently and successfully.</p>
Consider alignment of Source Protection Boundaries	Source Protection Regions were identified as a key factor in establishing proposed boundaries for regional conservation authorities.

Appendix I – Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Comments on ERO #025-1257

Theme	Comments
	<p>The proposed regional consolidation has the Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Authority merge with the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region and the Credit Valley Source Protection Area (which belongs to the Credit Valley – Toronto and Region – Central Lake Ontario Source Protection Region). The Niagara Peninsula is the only standalone Source Protection Authority included in the Western Lake Ontario RCA along with two Source Protection Regions.</p> <p>If the regional consolidation of the conservation authorities proceeds as proposed, there are several potential upcoming changes to the Source Protection Program as a result.</p> <p>Some of these potential changes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction of 19 Source Protection Regions/Areas down to 7 to match the proposed regional conservation authorities.• Subsequent reduction of 19 Source Protection Committees down to 7.• Restructuring of Source Protection Committees and their member allocations.• Consolidation of Source Protection Plans and Assessment Reports.• Source Protection Plan policy review and restructuring. <p>Should the Province proceed with a RCA framework, it is recommended that the boundaries of the RCAs align with the boundaries of the 19 Source Protection Regions/Areas.</p>
Clear Communication and Collaboration on Transition Frameworks	Engaging appropriate staff from RCAs through targeted working groups would ensure subject matter experts co-develop components of transitions that relate to their work.

What opportunities or benefits may come from a regional conservation authority framework?

Theme	Comments
Provincial investments to enhance conservation authority operations while maintaining recognition of unique watershed characteristics / challenges	There are opportunities to enhance conservation authority operations with consistent policies and procedures while maintaining recognition for the diversity of landscapes across Ontario. However, enhancements can be coordinated through the OPCA under the current CA framework.
Investing in and empowering CA strengths through a standardized framework.	<p>Ensuring CAs have access to similar expertise and resources across Ontario is welcomed, but priority should be given to implementing changes where CAs have identified demonstrable need.</p> <p>Given that CAs currently meet Provincial Government legislated permit review timelines 90% or more of the time, the proposed changes would likely result in diminishing returns for the taxpayer. The benefits, therefore, would come from avoiding the many risks of moving quickly without evidence of needed changes and real measurements.</p>
A provincially sponsored integrated watershed management program	Provincial guidance and sponsorship of the next generation of integrated watershed management programs is welcomed to support economic and environmental resilience across Ontario, and conservation authorities are uniquely positioned to deliver these programs alongside their natural hazard mandate. There is an opportunity to reduce long-term costs by preventing flood damage, erosion, and infrastructure failures while protecting property values by maintaining healthy watersheds and greenspaces that attract growth in the community. It remains unclear how an RCA framework would be more beneficial than coordinating integrated watershed programs through the OPCA under the current CA framework.

Do you have suggestions for how governance could be structured at the regional conservation authority level, including suggestions around board size, make-up and the municipal representative appointment process?

Theme	Comments
Ensure Board composition of RCAs accounts for the vast complexities and size of jurisdictions	<p>Current governance structures rely on population and property value-based approaches to determine municipal representation on Boards that would not capture the needs of the larger RCA watershed. This would result in the largest municipal jurisdictions having disproportionately low rates of representation.</p> <p>Under the proposed RCA structure, it is imperative that governance models reflect the size of jurisdictions served to ensure that all urban and rural areas are appropriately represented on the Board.</p> <p>A “one-size fits all” approach may not work. It is recommended that the OPCA consult with the municipalities within each RCA to determine the best formula/methodology for ensuring local representation balanced with ensuring efficiency of the Board.</p> <p>A set of core competencies should be developed to ensure RCA Board members have the desired experience and expertise to make local decisions related to CA mandates and responsibilities. Further, the Ministry or OPCA should provide a Board orientation and training session for each term of service.</p>
Municipal appointments must be maintained	<p>Participating municipalities provide substantial levy support to conservation authorities and should maintain their autonomy to appoint their allotted number of board members. In addition to elected official appointments, citizen and Indigenous community representation should be included.</p> <p>With changes to the <i>Planning Act</i> regarding removal of planning responsibilities from upper-tier municipalities there is an opportunity to explore how to best align RCA governance with local municipal planning responsibilities.</p>

Appendix I – Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Comments on ERO #025-1257

Theme	Comments
Consider transitional supports for newly established RCA Boards	<p>If RCA Boards are enacted after the 2026 municipal election, new Board members will be facing a plethora of information as they join a Board for brand-new institutions.</p> <p>The Province should explore establishing transitional supports to ensure newly established RCA Boards have institutional knowledge readily available for a pre-determined transitional period.</p> <p>This could include: extending current board terms for 2 years to support the RCA, appointing staff and/or Indigenous representatives</p>
Maintain local watershed offices with independent delegated authority to serve local communities	<p>The current CA offices should remain as local watershed offices with delegated responsibilities from the RCA Boards to ensure the continuous delivery of local programs and services, such as permit approvals, procurement and contract approvals, recruitment and management of staff, executing agreements and binding the authority, and preparing operating and capital budgets.</p> <p>Senior leadership of local offices could coordinate across the RCA through staff committees and report to the RCA Board or Committees, such as an Executive Committee, Governance Committee, or Finance Committee.</p> <p>The option to form public advisory committees or ad-hoc committee at the local level should remain.</p> <p>Equally important to maintain are the current local CA Foundations and their Boards who connect with donors and the community to raise funds to directly support the work of CAs. Foundations are a key source of revenue for non-mandatory programs and services, and have built community trust and confidence over several decades. Foundations must continue to operate without disruption.</p>

Do you have suggestions on how to maintain a transparent and consultative budgeting process across member municipalities within a regional conservation authority?

Theme	Comments
Prioritize Municipal Engagement in Budget Development	<p>A transparent and consultative budgeting process should clearly outline the scope of services and timelines for delivery, with measurable outcomes that are co-developed to meet the unique needs of participating municipalities.</p> <p>Maintain meaningful local representation directly in the budget process so that each local CA has clear input and influence, and local priorities drive levy discussions.</p> <p>Respecting local special levies/funding and municipal service agreements so that locally funded initiatives—such as land acquisition, land management, trail maintenance, restoration projects, or capital works—remain under local control and cannot be redirected without municipal consent.</p> <p>Using a clear, standardized regional budget framework in which each local CA develops its own budget in alignment with local municipalities, and these are then consolidated at the regional level for transparency and oversight.</p>
Consolidation-related Costs must be funded by the province.	<p>NPCA has made significant investments in software, systems and process improvements in recent years. It would be unreasonable for municipal partners to shoulder the cost of Agency-directed initiatives without involvement in the decision-making process.</p> <p>It is recommended that the OPCA fully fund the transitional costs and not download those costs to the municipalities who fund CAs. Costs related to lost opportunity and investments made by CAs should be accounted for and supported by the OPCA. Further, it is recommended that there is an annual audit of OPCA performed, versus the initial 3-year reporting schedule.</p>

Appendix I – Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Comments on ERO #025-1257

Theme	Comments
Funds generated by watershed jurisdictions must be retained in their communities	<p>Participating municipalities need to be consulted on any changes and remain confident that the apportionment model is sustainable and equitable.</p> <p>Any self-generated revenues and financial assets rolled into newly established RCAs must be committed to the jurisdiction they were collected from.</p> <p>Ensuring full disclosure and due diligence on assets, liabilities, capital obligations/asset management for all local CAs before any apportionment or levy model is adopted.</p>

How can regional conservation authorities maintain and strengthen relationships with local communities and stakeholders?

Theme	Comments
Proactive engagement and awareness initiatives is critical to mitigate risks of disconnection with communities	<p>Locally relevant communications and brand identities are at risk of being lost; communication must be consistent and proactive to ensure interested parties stay informed.</p> <p>There are concerns that RCAs would erode long-standing working relationships that have enabled the collaborative, grassroots approach that underpins NPCAs programs and services.</p> <p>A very cautious implementation process that engages with local communities and interested parties would reduce risk and disruption of programs and services.</p>
Co-development of Transitional Period Phases	<p>Implementation of the transition to RCAs will require a resource shift to focus on consolidating organizational structures, municipal relationships, financial systems, software, and internal processes, pulling resources away from providing programs and services to the communities CAs serve.</p> <p>Co-developing these transition periods will enable CAs and participating municipalities to determine what priorities would best serve their communities now, and how they will get there.</p> <p>It is recommended that the current Board structures for each local CA office remains as is and the amalgamation of Boards is formulated and lead by the local Board representatives. This would provide a sufficient transition period at which time the new RCA Boards would take effect after the 2030 municipal elections. This would mitigate operational disruptions and build trust and confidence in the new governance model.</p>
Ensure responsive representation and accessible staff remain in the communities they serve	Local offices, staff, and programs are essential for timely permitting, service delivery, and effective stewardship. Delivering on community needs is at risk without a known local presence.



John D. Elvidge
City Clerk

City Clerk's Office

Secretariat
Sylvia Przedziecki
Council Secretariat Support
City Hall, 12th Floor, West
100 Queen Street West
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web: www.toronto.ca

In reply please quote:
Ref.: 25-MM34.6

(Sent by Email)

December 4, 2025

ALL ONTARIO MUNICIPALITIES:

Subject: Member Motion Item 34.6
Adding Swim to Survive to the Ontario Curriculum to Improve Water Safety
and Save Lives - by Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, seconded by Councillor
Rachel Chernos Lin (Ward All)

City Council on November 12 and 13, 2025, considered [Item MM34.6](#) and a copy is attached for your information or appropriate action.

Przedziecki

for City Clerk

S. Przedziecki/ss

Attachment

Sent to: Toronto Members of Provincial Parliament
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
All Ontario municipalities

c. City Manager



Decisions

C Council

Member Motions - Meeting 34

MM34. - Adding Swim to Survive to the Ontario Curriculum to Improve Water Safety and Save Lives - by Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, seconded by Councillor Rachel Chernos Lin

Notice of Motion

Decision Type: ACTION

Status: Adopted

Wards: All

City Council Decision

C Council November 12 and 13, 2025, adopted the following:

1. C Council urges the Ontario Minister of Education to mandate water safety and Swim Surviving in the elementary school curriculum for all Ontario students.

2. C Council rewards those provincial Minister of Education, all Toronto Members of Provincial Parliament, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and all Ontario municipalities who request further recommendations.

Summary

Drinking safety is the leading cause of preventable deaths among children in Ontario and research by the Lifesaving Society of Ontario shows that children who drink never ended up in the water. Evidence demonstrates that even basic swimming and water survival skills can reduce the risk of drowning.

Many children in Ontario do not have equitable access to swimming lessons due to financial, cultural, or geographic barriers. The Minister of Education has the authority to mandate water safety and survival training in the regular elementary school curriculum as a universal, life-saving skill comparable to fire safety and road safety measures.

The [City of Dryden](#), [City of St. Catharines](#), and [Niagara Regional Council](#) have all recently adopted a call on the provincial government to add the Swim Survival program to the elementary school curriculum for all Ontario students.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM34.6

(<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2025/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-259804.pdf>)

Communications (City Council)

(November 12, 2025) Email from Nicole Cerrad (MM.New) 6



The Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills
Resolutions
Regular Council - 29 May 2025

Page 1 of 2
Item

Date: May 29, 2025

#: 2025- 213

Moved by: Bob Lissner

Seconded by: Tommy McPolley

That Council receives correspondence item 11.2 from the Town of Mattawa regarding Strong Mayor Powers as information; and

That Council supports the Town of Mattawa resolution 25-95 and also states the following:

WHEREAS the Government of Ontario announced an expansion of strong mayor powers to an additional 169 municipalities that took effect May 1, 2025;

AND WHEREAS the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills was included in the additional 169 municipalities that gained such powers;

AND WHEREAS these powers allow mayors to unilaterally override council decisions, appoint senior municipal staff, and set budgets without majority council approval, undermining the principles of democratic governance;

AND WHEREAS municipal governance functions best through a collaborative decision-making process where elected councils, representing the collective voice of their communities, work alongside experienced municipal staff and the proposed powers has raised significant concerns regarding the centralization of power, erosion of local democracy, reduced accountability and the potential for the abuse of power;

AND WHEREAS there is no evidence to suggest that strong mayor powers have increased housing starts, contrary to the provincial government's stated justification for their implementation;

AND WHEREAS the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) has raised concerns that strong mayor powers blur the lines between political leadership and administration expertise, threatening the neutrality of municipal public service;

AND WHEREAS the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills has a long history of collaborative, transparent and accountable local governance built upon a foundation of Council debated and shared decision-making;

AND WHEREAS a growing number of municipalities and elected officials across Ontario are questioning the appropriateness of the strong mayor system and are calling for its reconsideration or appeal.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills opposes the expansion of strong mayor powers and formally request that the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing immediately remove the Township of Minden Hills from the list of municipalities that was granted strong mayor powers under the designated legislation.

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and all Ontario municipalities.

Carried

Defeated

Recorded Vote

Recorded Vote:

	For	Against	Absent
Mayor Bob Carter		✓	
Deputy Mayor Lisa Schell	✓		
Councillor Tammy McKelvey	✓		
Councillor Ivan Ingram	✓		
Councillor Shirley Johannessen	✓		
Councillor Pam Sayne	✓		
Councillor Bob Sisson	✓		



Mayor Bob Carter

December 9, 2025

The Honourable Todd J. McCarthy
Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks
CollegePark, 5th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Honourable Minister McCarthy,

Please be advised that the following resolution was passed by the Council of the Town of Ingersoll at its meeting held on December 8, 2025:

Moved by Councillor Bowman
Seconded by Councillor Hutson

THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Ingersoll receives the correspondence from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority regarding Bill 68 as information;

AND WHEREAS the Conservation Authorities Act (1946) enables municipalities to establish local conservation authorities, and when municipalities choose to form such authorities, they assume responsibility for governance and funding through the appointment of a Board of Directors and the provision of an annual levy to cover expenses;

AND WHEREAS the Town of Ingersoll established the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority with other consenting municipalities within the watershed. (initially formed in 1947)

AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide approximately 35% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 2% (2026 budget);

AND WHEREAS municipalities have governed and invested local rate payer funds in their respective conservation authorities for decades, tailoring programs and services to local watershed needs, maintaining accountable service standards, and ensuring fair and predictable costs for ratepayers;

AND WHEREAS conservation authorities collectively own and manage thousands of acres of land. Many of these properties were entrusted to the

UTRCA for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good, with the expectation that such lands would be cared for by locally governed conservation authorities;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, a Crown corporation that would assume governance responsibilities and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities, with municipal cost apportionment yet to be defined;

AND WHEREAS the Province already possesses the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations, and standards through the Conservation Authorities Act and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of Town of Ingersoll calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands;

AND FURTHER THAT while the Town of Ingersoll supports provincial goals towards consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization. It does not support it through imposing a new top-down agency structure creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs;

AND FURTHER THAT the Town of Ingersoll supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity, and program delivery across the province, and requests that the Province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities;

AND FURTHER THAT the Province respect the roles that Municipalities and Conservation Authorities play in conservation and governance;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to:

- The Ontario Minister of Environment, Conservation, and Parks;
- local MPPs;
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario;
- Rural Ontario Municipal Association;
- area Indigenous communities;
- all municipalities;

- Conservation Authorities; and
- Conservation Ontario.

Kind regards,



Julie Clayton

Julie Clayton, Deputy Clerk
julie.clayton@ingersoll.ca

cc: Ernie Hardeman, Member of Provincial Parliament for Oxford
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA)
Area Indigenous Communities
All municipalities
Conservation Authorities
Conservation Ontario



Township of Central Frontenac

14216 Road 38, P.O. Box 89, Sharbot Lake, ON K0H 2P0
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www.centralfrontenac.com



December 10, 2025

The Honourable Todd McCarthy
College Park, 5th Floor
777 Bay St.
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 2J3
Delivered via email: minister.mecp@ontario.ca

RE: The Proposed Amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act.

This is to advise you that at the Council Meeting of December 9, 2025, the following resolution was approved.

WHEREAS the Conservation Authorities Act (1946) enables municipalities to establish local conservation authorities, and when municipalities choose to form such authorities, they assume responsibility for governance and funding through the appointment of a Board of Directors and the provision of an annual levy;

AND WHEREAS local municipalities established the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority in 1966, the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority in 1968, and the Quinte Conservation Authority in 1947, and currently provide over 50% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides less than 5%;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have governed their respective conservation authorities for decades, tailoring programs and services to local watershed needs, maintaining accountable services standards, and ensuring fair and predictable costs for ratepayers;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) and ERO posting 025-1257 proposes to consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities and create the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, a Crown agency that would assume oversight over conservation authorities and have the ability to levy authorities to cover its costs;

AND WHEREAS the Province already possesses the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations, standards and policies across all conservation authorities through the Conservation Authorities Act and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks;

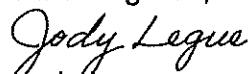
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Corporation of the Township of Central Frontenac calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands;

AND FURTHER THAT while the Corporation of the Township of Central Frontenac supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down agency structure without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs;

AND FURTHER THAT the Corporation of the Township of Central Frontenac supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity and program delivery across the province, and requests that the province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to determine the most effective level of strategic consolidation to achieve both provincial and local objectives;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to the Ontario Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, to the local MP(s) and MPP(s), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, the local conservation authority(s), and all municipalities in Ontario.

Kind Regards,



Jody Legue

Deputy Clerk

jlegue@centralfrontenac.com

cc. via email

Hon. John Jordan MPP, Hon. Scott Reid MP, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, The Rural Ontario Municipal Association, Quinte Conservation Authority, Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Conservation Ontario and all Municipalities in Ontario



CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF SOUTH HURON

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December 11, 2025

Via email: doug.fordco@pc.ola.org

Premier's Office
Room 281
Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A5

Dear Hon. Doug Ford,

Re: Opposition to Proposed Consolidation of Conservation Authorities

Please be advised that South Huron Council passed the following resolution at their December 1, 2025, Regular Council Meeting:

496-2025

Moved By: Ted Oke

Seconded by: Wendy McLeod-Haggitt

That South Huron Council supports the November 17, 2025 resolution of Town of Kingsville regarding Opposition to Proposed Consolidation of Conservation Authorities; and

That the supporting resolution and originating documentation be circulated to the Premier, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, MPP Thompson, AMCTO, AMO and all Ontario Municipalities.

Result: Carried

I have attached the originating correspondence for your reference.

Respectfully,

Kendra Webster, Legislative & Licensing Coordinator
Municipality of South Huron
kwebster@southhuron.ca
519-235-0310 x. 232

Encl.

cc: Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Hon. Todd J. McCarthy, todd.mccarthy@pc.ola.org; Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Hon. Rob Flack, rob.flack@pc.ola.org; MPP, Hon. Lisa Thompson, lisa.thompson@pc.ola.org; AMCTO, amcto@amcto.com; AMO, resolutions@amo.on.ca; and all Ontario Municipalities



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November 19, 2025

Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Via Email: premier@ontario.ca

Public Input Coordinator
Via Email: ca.office@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford,

Re: Opposition to Proposed Consolidation of Conservation Authorities

Please be advised that at its Regular Meeting held Monday, November 17, 2025, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Kingsville passed the following resolution respecting the matter referenced in the above subject line:

195-11172025

Moved By: Councillor Neufeld
Seconded By: Councillor Patterson

Whereas the Conservation Authorities Act, 1990 (the "Act"), originally enacted in 1946, was established to allow municipalities to form conservation authorities that are equipped to develop and deliver local, watershed-based conservation, restoration and natural resource management programs on behalf of the province and municipalities;

And whereas there are thirty-six (36) conservation authorities in Ontario, each of which is distinct and reflects the unique environmental, geographic and community needs of its watershed;

And whereas on October 31, 2025, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation which would amend the Act to create the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven (7) regional conservation authorities.

Now therefore be it resolved that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Kingsville:

- Wishes to formally state that it opposes the consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities without knowing the full financial and operational impact to municipalities and the conservation authorities; and,

- Directs the Acting Clerk to forward a copy of this resolution to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Todd McCarthy, the Honourable Rob Flack, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Anthony Leardi, MPP, Essex, Lisa Gretzky, MPP Windsor West, Andrew Dowie, MPP Windsor-Tecumseh, Trevor Jones, MPP Chatham-Kent-Leamington, AMCTO, AMO and all Ontario Municipalities.

Carried.

Please accept this correspondence as an official confirmation of Council's decision with respect to the same. Any questions may be directed to the undersigned.

Sincerely,



Angela Toole
Acting Manager of Municipal Governance/Clerk
519-733-2305 ext. 223
atoole@kingsville.ca

cc. Honourable Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Anthony Leardi, MPP, Essex
Lisa Gretzky, MPP, Windsor West
Andrew Dowie, MPP, Windsor-Tecumseh
Trevor Jones, MPP, Chatham-Kent-Leamington
Essex Region Conservation Authority
Conservation Ontario
AMCTO
AMO
All Ontario Municipalities