

June 18, 2025

Via email only

To: Hon. Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks - minister.mecp@ontario.ca
MP Jamie Schmale, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes – Jamie.schmale@parl.gc.ca
MPP Dave Smith, Peterborough-Kawartha – dave.smithco@pc.ola.org
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – policy@amo.on.ca
Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) – roma@roma.on.ca

Re: Opposition to Conservation Authority Consolidation

Please be advised that during their Regular Council meeting held December 16, 2025, Council passed the following resolution:

Resolution No. **R2025-515**

Moved by Councillor Franzen
Seconded by Councillor Braybrook

Mayor Lambshead	For
Deputy Mayor Armstrong	For
Councillor Franzen	For
Councillor Braybrook	For
Councillor Cadigan	For

Whereas the Conservation Authorities Act (1946) enable 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 local municipalities currently provide between 25% and 50% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 3%;

And Whereas municipalities have worked with 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, much of which was donated by local residents and entrusted to conservation authorities as a personal legacy 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 63 (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;

And Whereas unfunded transition costs will fall on municipalities, including IT integration, HR restructuring, rebranding, land title work, asset transfers and legal harmonization;

And Whereas the new Provincial Agency will impose additional costs as Bill 68 empowers the Agency to levy fees on regional conservation authorities, ultimately increasing municipal levy obligations;

And Whereas there is insufficient evidence supporting consolidation as there has been no business case, cost-benefit analysis, or transition funding plan provided by the Province;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved That the Council of the Municipality of Trent Lakes 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 Municipality of Trent Lakes 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 Municipality of Trent Lakes 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 further

That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Ontario Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks; local MP and MPPs; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA); all Peterborough County municipalities; Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island First Nations; and Kawartha Region and Otonabee Region Conservation Authorities.

Carried.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Mayor and Council of the Municipality of Trent Lakes

cc: Peterborough County Lower Tier Municipalities
Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island First Nations
Kawartha Region and Otonabee Region Conservation Authorities