



May 2, 2024

MNRF - RPDPB - Resources Development Section
300 Water Street
2nd Floor South
Peterborough, ON

Re: **ERO Posting No. 019-8320**

Regulation detailing new Minister's Permit and Review powers under the *Conservation Authorities Act*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the "Regulation detailing new Minister's Permit and Review powers under the *Conservation Authorities Act*".

LPRCA has reviewed the proposed regulation and can provide the following comments for the Province's consideration.

1. Uncertainty, confusion, and time delays may result in enacting the Minister's powers

- There is very little information relating to how the Minister will review permit applications, and what technical information they have in order to review the application in comparison to a Conservation Authority. Will the Minister utilize the Conservation Authority's resources, will they use internal staff or outsource to consultants for review? The utilization of third-party consultants may add time delays and add additional costs to the process for which Conservation Authority staff provide a cost-effective service for the review.
- It is uncertain how a Ministerial decision-making process would be faster or more efficient than LPRCA's permit approval process. LPRCA over the past several years has greatly improved the permitting process and in 2023, LPRCA staff issued all permits for development within 30 days of receiving a complete application. The average permit turnaround time for a minor application was 3 days in 2023 and 3.7 days for major applications.

2. Potential increased risk to life and property

- Conservation Authorities throughout the Province have the most up-to-date information relating to natural hazards including floodplain mapping. It is unclear how an application would be evaluated by the Minister and whether or not the same criteria utilized by Conservation Authorities would be utilized.
- Due to liability concerns, if the Minister is to make a decision on a permit application it should be the responsibility of the Ministry to follow up on the application to complete compliance inspections and undertake any enforcement requirements if necessary.

3. The broad range of circumstances for which the Minister's powers could be enacted

- The Province is proposing a broad range of circumstances for which a Minister may enact their powers, it is suggested that only in extreme and unique circumstances should the Minister enact their powers.

LPRCA supports the Province's goals in order to meet housing targets and provide clarity, transparency and an efficient permit review process for applications. It is important to note that Conservation Authorities are the leaders in providing technical information and assessment of risks related to natural hazards, including preventing or mitigating those risks through their mandatory programs and services. The responsibilities of delivering these services should remain with the Conservation Authority and only under extreme circumstances should the Minister enact their powers under the proposed regulation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments. We appreciate your consideration of the proposed changes in this submission to identify solutions that will increase Ontario's housing supply without jeopardizing public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. Chambers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Chambers
Chair