



December 19, 2025

Sent Via E-Mail

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy (Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks)
MPP, Steve Pinsonneault (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex)
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Rural Ontario Municipal Association

RE: Proposed Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities

Please be advised the Council of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre passed the following resolution on December 17, 2025:

Resolution 2025-293

Moved by Councillor Shipley
Seconded by Councillor Coles

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 Municipality of Middlesex Centre provides funding to the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, the Kettle Creek Conservation Authority, the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority, the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority;

AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide over 50% of total conservation authority funding;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have governed 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 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 the Municipality of Middlesex Centre 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 Middlesex Centre 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 Middlesex Centre 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, to the local MPP, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association.

Sincerely,



Brianna Hammer-Keidel
Manager of Legislative Services & Municipal Clerk
Municipality of Middlesex Centre