



December 22, 2025

Premier Doug Ford

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Hon. Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Hon. Jill Dunlop, Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance

Hon. Mike Harris, Minister of Natural Resources

Hon. Andrea Khanjin, Minister of Red Tape Reduction

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs

**RE: Proposed Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities
(ERO 025-1257)**

The Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods (Ontario), on behalf of urban communities across the Province, urges the Ontario Government to pause making the rapid, drastic, costly, and irreparable changes to the structure of Conservation Authorities as contained in this policy proposal; rather we ask that the Province establish an independent public process to consider a future course for the CAs, with full engagement with conservation authorities, municipalities, other stakeholders, and the public.

For nearly 80 years, the Conservation Authorities have been tasked with protecting public health and safety related to the province's watersheds. That means safeguarding local drinking water sources and working to reduce the risks from natural hazards like flooding, erosion and drought. As Ontario's population has grown, they have also been responsible for regulating development to minimize those risks, issuing permits only to those who pay attention to sustainable construction and growth. This critically important work must continue.

Now, the Ontario government is proposing to reduce the network of watershed based conservation authorities from 36 to 7. Ontario's conservation authorities are internationally recognized for their effective hazard management, and land and water conservation efforts. The proposal is to amalgamate and centralize their decision-making — all in an effort to speed up development. This record must not be

jeopardized through arbitrary, hasty and poorly considered changes which do not have the backing of those responsible for carrying them out. It may be anticipated that a merger of this scale would “create a larger, more distant bureaucracy that is less responsive to local municipalities, developers, businesses and farmers, exactly the people who need timely service and value having a local municipal official or trusted member of staff they can call directly. Losing that connection could slow approvals, create confusion and ultimately have the opposite effect of what the government intends.”¹

We request that the Province not proceed with the consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoff Kettel

Geoff Kettel
President

c.c. Marit Stiles, Leader of the Official Opposition, Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario
John Fraser, Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario
Mike Schreiner, Leader, Green Party of Ontario
Hassaan Basit, Chief Conservation Executive, Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
Conservation Ontario
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Rural Ontario Municipal Association

¹ Jonathan Scott, Chair of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority.