

Member Municipalities

Township of
Adelaide-Metcalf

Municipality of
Brooke-Alvinston

Municipality of
Chatham-Kent

Township of
Dawn-Euphemia

Township of
Enniskillen

Municipality of
Lambton Shores

Municipality of
Middlesex Centre

Village of
Newbury

Village of
Oil Springs

Town of
Petrolia

Town of
Plympton-Wyoming

Village of
Point Edward

City of
Sarnia

Municipality of
Southwest Middlesex

Township of
St. Clair

Municipality of
Strathroy-Caradoc

Township of
Warwick

December 15, 2025

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
todd.mccarthy@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister McCarthy,

I write to you today as the recently elected Chair of the Board of Directors for the **St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA)** and as a representative of our municipal partners, including the Village of Point Edward. I have had the privilege of serving on the SCRCA Board for almost four years, and in that period have been deeply impressed by the dedication of our staff, the calibre of their stewardship work, and the region-specific knowledge that informs every program and service we deliver.

The SCRCA's **vision** of fostering "*a healthy and sustainable natural environment in the St. Clair region*" and its **mission** to provide "*leadership through coordination of watershed planning, implementation of resource management programs and promotion of conservation awareness, in cooperation with others*" are not abstract ideals; they are the guiding principles by which our team and board actively serve our watershed and our member municipalities every day.

Our five-year **Strategic Plan (2023–2028)** articulates goals and objectives developed through thoughtful consultation with staff, board members, member municipalities, and watershed residents. These goals emphasize the importance of continued partnership, focused stewardship, and adaptive planning to protect life, property, and natural resources across a diverse watershed including the **Sydenham River** watershed and smaller watersheds draining into **Lake Huron**, the **St. Clair River** and northeastern **Lake St. Clair**.

Point Edward and other shoreline communities depend on the continuity of SCRCA's localized, watershed-based approach to flood and erosion management, water quality protection, habitat restoration, and public education. These are not simply administrative tasks—they are tangible services that reduce risk to residents, support economic activity, and enhance our collective connection to the environment. Programs such as our Healthy Watersheds initiatives demonstrate this impact annually by working directly with landowners to implement best management practices that improve water quality and safeguard local ecosystems. I firmly support the Province's efforts to modernize and standardize permitting processes, expand shared services, and harness digital tools to improve efficiency.

"working together for a healthy environment"

However, I am concerned that the proposed creation of an **Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency** and the consolidation of authorities into larger regional bodies risk undermining local accountability and the close-knit collaboration that has served our watershed for over six decades. Local representation—rooted in municipal appointments and watershed knowledge—ensures responsiveness to community specifics in ways that broad provincial structures cannot easily replicate.

The SCRCA model, with representation from 17 municipalities, including the Village of Point Edward, allows for decisions that reflect local realities, seasonal nuances on the St. Clair River and Lake Huron shorelines, and community priorities tailored to the unique characteristics of our watershed. It is precisely this local commitment that upholds the SCRCA's mission and delivers on its strategic goals of protecting natural resources, building resilience to hazards, and enhancing environmental stewardship for current and future generations.

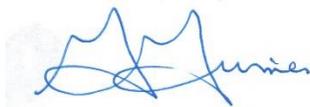
Thus, while I recognize and value the Province's intention to refine conservation administration, I respectfully urge that any legislative or regulatory changes **retain locally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities** with meaningful municipal voice, authority, and accountability. This structure best protects both provincial objectives and the local needs of the communities listed on our letterhead and the broader St. Clair watershed we proudly serve.

Please accept this letter as an expression of my personal commitment to working collaboratively with your Ministry, municipal partners, and other stakeholders to find balanced approaches that support both provincial consistency and local stewardship excellence.

A copy of this letter will be forwarded to our local Member of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliament, as well as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and our Board members.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Greg Grimes
Chair, Board of Directors
St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

Deputy Mayor
Village of Point Edward

Cc MP Marilyn Gladu, Sarnia-Lambton-Bkejwanong
MPP Bob Bailey, Sarnia-Lambton
MPP Steve Pinsonneault, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA)
SCRCA Board Members