



Strategic Initiatives and Government Relations

CAOs Office

Halton Region

1151 Bronte Road

Oakville, ON L6M 3L1

December 22, 2025

Public Input Coordinator

MECP Conservation and Source Protection Branch

300 Water Street North Tower, 5th Floor

Peterborough, ON K9J 3C7

RE: ERO Notice #025-1257 – Consultation on Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities

To Whom it May Concern:

Halton Region staff appreciate the opportunity to review and provide comments related to the consultation on proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities which is currently posted for commenting under ERO Notice #025-1257 (the “Notice”). Regional staff thank the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for its efforts to seek efficiencies in Conservation Authority processes, as well as streamline and standardize service delivery across the Province.

As an upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities, Halton Region no longer has approval authority over planning matters; however, the Region remains responsible for key regional infrastructure and services. These services include water and wastewater infrastructure, regional roads and source water protection, among others.

In addition, Halton Region provides funding for three Conservation Authorities (Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation and Grand River Conservation) via a municipal levy for each authority, that is apportioned to the participating municipalities in the Region’s watershed based on the municipalities’ current value assessment within the watershed in accordance with *Conservation Authorities Act* requirements.

Regional Municipality of Halton

HEAD OFFICE: 1151 Bronte Rd, Oakville, ON L6M 3L1

905-825-6000 | Toll free: 1-866-442-5866

Given Halton Region's role in these areas, Halton Region has an interest in the proposed consolidation process. Comments from Regional staff provided in this submission focus on areas of the consultation that are most relevant to Halton Region, namely transparent and consultative budgeting processes, permitting processes and source water protection. Comments are organized by the following consultation questions identified in the Notice for areas that impact Halton Region:

- A. What do you see as key factors to support a successful transition and outcome of regional conservation authority consolidation?
- B. Do you have suggestions on how to maintain a transparent and consultative budgeting process across member municipalities within a regional conservation authority?

Halton Region Staff Comments

A. What do you see as key factors to support a successful transition and outcome of regional conservation authority consolidation?

Halton Region has positive working relationships with the three Conservation Authorities (Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation and Grand River Conservation) with watersheds within the region. Although Halton Region no longer has planning authority as an upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities, Halton remains responsible for planning and delivering municipal infrastructure, such as water, wastewater and roads. The construction of this infrastructure is critical to supporting our Local Municipalities' housing pledges.

Halton Region works closely with Conservation Authorities to review and obtain permits in an efficient and timely manner to support the delivery of Regional infrastructure. Conservation Authorities are critical partners throughout infrastructure construction and regularly attend project meetings to remain informed and ensure compliance with permit requirements.

In particular, Halton Region has a service agreement in place with Conservation Halton for a dedicated staff complement to review and process Regional permit applications to ensure timely delivery of Region's infrastructure program. It is critical that any new regional Conservation Authority created must review and issue permits related to municipal infrastructure in an efficient manner, as any extension to current processing times would delay key infrastructure projects. Maintaining or improving the processing time for permits related to municipal infrastructure projects is an essential outcome and must be a key metric in measuring the success of any regional consolidation.

Conservation Authorities are also critical partners for the delivery of the Source Water Protection program that supports the protection of the region's sources of municipal drinking water. It is important that new regional Conservation Authorities maintain their role in effective management within Source Protection Regions and continue to support technical and policy decisions. Maintaining the local knowledge and experience of Conservation Authority staff who work on Source Water Protection will be essential to the success of the ongoing efforts to protect our sources of municipal drinking water.

B. Do you have suggestions on how to maintain a transparent and consultative budgeting process across member municipalities within a regional conservation authority?

Halton Region has strong collaboration and good processes in place with the three Conservation Authorities (Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation and Grand River Conservation) within the region's watershed related to budget planning and would be supportive of retaining, to the extent possible, existing budgeting processes for continuity. In addition, to maintain a transparent and consultative budgeting process, roles and responsibilities of member municipalities in a larger governance model must be clearly defined to promote collaborative decision-making.

The proposed regional Conservation Authorities must provide an ability for member municipalities to review, provide feedback and comment on draft budgets before any major decisions are finalized – ongoing communication throughout budget development will be key. Another proposed suggestion is that budget timelines, key milestones and supporting documentation surrounding the budget process should be published and shared on a platform accessible to all member municipalities.

Conclusion

Halton Region staff appreciate the opportunity to comment on the consultation for the proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities. Regional staff thank the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for its efforts to seek efficiencies in Conservation Authority processes, as well as streamline and standardize service delivery across the Province. As noted above, success of the proposed consolidations being considered will be measured by the ability to ensure timely permit application review for municipal infrastructure, maintaining protection of source municipal drinking water and transparent and collaborative budgeting processes.

Thank you for providing the Region with the opportunity to comment. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss these comments with Provincial staff should additional clarity be needed.

Sincerely,

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Hayley Watts

Director, Strategic Initiatives and Government Relations

CAOs Office, Halton Region