

November 27, 2025

Re: Proposed Regional Consolidation of Conservation Authorities, ERO Notice #025-1257
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Resolution #130/25

With the passing of Bill 68 on November 25, 2025, the Province of Ontario has established a new oversight body called the “Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency” (OPCA) to oversee Conservation Authorities (CAs) and the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for CAs in Ontario.

At the November 26, 2025 Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) Board Meeting, the LRCA Board of Directors passed a resolution opposing the Province’s proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration as outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257, which proposes to consolidate the LRCA into a region 1,500 kilometres from the Lakehead Watershed with 72 other southern Ontario municipalities. The resolution also recommends that the LRCA form a stand alone independent Regional Conservation Authority, as the “Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority” to ensure that the interests of Northwestern Ontario are equitably represented. Additionally, the Board is also requesting that the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the LRCA before finalizing any consolidation boundaries.

The Board of Directors acknowledges the Province’s goals in amalgamating conservation authorities; however, strongly believes that the LRCA is unique both in location and the region that it serves and therefore should not be amalgamated with conservation authorities with no watershed or municipal connection.

LRCA Resolution #130/25 has been attached. The LRCA encourages all partners to review the posting <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/025-1257> and submit comments prior to the closing date of December 22, 2025.

For further information, please contact the undersigned at info@lakeheadca.com.

Yours truly,



Donna Blunt
Chair

Encl.: LRCA Board Resolution #130/25

c.c.:

Hon. Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Peter Tabuns, MPP, Critic, Environment, Conservation and Parks
Kevin Holland, MPP, Thunder Bay – Atikokan
Lise Vaugoeis, MPP, Thunder Bay- Superior North
Marcus Powlowski, MP – Thunder Bay – Rainy River
Hon. Patty Hajdu – MP Thunder Bay – Superior North
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Conservation Ontario
All local municipalities
All Conservation Authorities in Ontario

LRCA Resolution #130/25

Moved by: Sheelagh Hendrick
Seconded by: Brian Kurikka

With Respect to the posting by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Environmental Registry Notice No. 025-1257 ("Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities"), proposing to reduce Ontario's 36 conservation authorities to 7 regional entities as part of a broader restructuring that would create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide centralized oversight and direction under the Conservation Authorities Act;

AND THAT *under this proposal, the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) would be merged into a new "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" together with:*

- *Grey Sauble Conservation*
- *the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority*
- *the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority*
- *the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority*
- *the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority*
- *the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority*

forming a single organization encompassing the eastern shores of Lake Huron, the southern shores of Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe, and the western shores of Lake Superior in Northwestern Ontario;

AND THAT *the LRCA Board acknowledges and supports the Province's goals of improved efficiency, consistency and fiscal prudence in conservation delivery,*

AND THAT *the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is a self-sufficient entity that is; accountable to its member municipalities;*

- *financially resilient;*
- *consistently processes permits in less than 7 days;*
- *operates in the City of Thunder Bay that has exceeded their housing target by 143%;*
- *has modern financial and IT processes that prioritize security and redundancy; and*
- *is a locally recognized leader in the conservation and protection of the Lakehead Watershed; and*
- *all staff are front line workers,*

AND THAT *the Board further recognizes that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is unique as it does not abut any other Conservation Authority and solely serves Northwestern Ontario communities that face vastly different climatic, hydrological, geographic and infrastructure realities, and would be disconnected to the proposed larger overarching*

administrative structure that is physically based 1,500 kilometres from the north with 72 other municipalities;

The Board finds that the proposed “Huron-Superior Region” configuration would :

- *Create a geographically vast and administratively complex entity, joining Northwestern Ontario with fast-growing Southern Ontario municipalities that are 1,300-1,500 kilometres apart with no shared watershed connection or economic alignment;*
- *dilute local accountability and municipal partnership, contrary to the principle that decisions are best made at the local level;*
- *generate substantial transition costs — including human-resources integration, governance restructuring, IT migration and policy harmonization, rebranding — that would divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay measurable outcomes, contrary to the Province’s business-planning principles of value for money, cost containment and service continuity; and*
- *risk greater uncertainty and delay for builders, developers and farmers, as local permitting offices and staff familiar with local conditions are replaced by distant regional structures, making it harder for applicants to obtain timely local advice, resolve issues or expedite housing and infrastructure approvals that support the Province’s “Get It Done” agenda;*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Board of Directors is opposed to the proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND THAT *the Board recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the 8th Regional Conservation Authority as the “Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority”;*

AND THAT *further provincial evaluation is conducted with a more focused specific model as a geographically coherent, cost-effective and locally accountable alternative that advances the government’s priorities of efficiency, red-tape reduction and timely housing delivery;*

AND THAT *the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;*

AND THAT *this resolution, with a letter from the Chair, be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to:*

- *the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics;*
- *local Members of Provincial Parliament;*
- *local Members of Parliament;*
- *the Association of Municipalities of Ontario;*
- *Conservation Ontario;*
- *All local municipalities; and*
- *All Conservation Authorities in Ontario.*

Carried