



December 5, 2025

VIA EMAIL: [minister.mecp@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mecp@ontario.ca)

Honourable Todd McCarthy  
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks  
5<sup>th</sup> Flr, 777 Bay St.  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

**Re: Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities**

Dear Minister McCarthy,

Council of the Municipality of Neebing reviewed your Ministry's proposal related to boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities (ERO Posting 025-1257).

At their meeting on December 3, 2025, Council carried the following resolution:

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 municipalities within Lakehead Region established the Neebing Valley Conservation Authority in 1954 which enlarged to the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) in 1963;

AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide approximately 50% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 5%;

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 hectares of land, much of which was donated by local residents as a personal legacy for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good;

AND WHEREAS proposed governance changes risk undermining community trust and donor confidence, as these contributions were made with the expectation of local accountability and decision-making in the care and management of these lands;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes creating the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA), a Crown corporation that would assume governance responsibilities and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities; however, municipal cost apportionment, the overall cost of establishing and operating the OPCA, and the anticipated cost of consolidation remain undisclosed, creating significant uncertainty for municipalities and ratepayers, even as local watershed advisory boards would still be needed for oversight;

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;

AND WHEREAS such consolidation risks the loss of local viewpoints and representation, reducing the ability of communities to influence decisions that directly affect their watersheds, conservation lands, and municipal levies;

AND WHEREAS the Lakehead Region is located over 1,300 kilometers away from the other conservation authorities, making the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration geographically impractical and disconnected from local watershed realities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Municipality of Neebing 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 THAT the Council of the Municipality of Neebing requests that the Province provide full transparency regarding the projected costs of establishing the OPCA and consolidating conservation authorities, including the impact on municipal levies and ratepayers, before implementing any governance changes;

AND FURTHER THAT the Council of the Municipality of Neebing supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, but 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 Council of the Municipality of Neebing 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 Council of the Municipality of Neebing is opposed to the proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND FURTHER THAT the Council of the Municipality of Neebing recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the “Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority”;

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

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics; MPP Kevin Holland; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; Conservation Ontario; all local municipalities; and all conservation authorities in Ontario.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Erika Kromm  
Clerk Treasurer  
(Resolution No. 2025-12-281)

cc: Public Input Coordinator, MECP Conservation and Source Protection Branch  
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