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December 18, 2025

The Honourable Todd McCarthy
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

**Subject: Support for Ganaraska Regional Conservation Authority Board
Resolution on Proposed Regional Consolidation of Conservation
Authorities (ERO 025-1257)**

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Municipality of Port Hope, we appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the regional consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities (ERO 025-1257). We write to express our strong support for the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) Board resolution adopted on November 27, 2025. We share GRCA's view that meaningful modernization can be achieved within the current watershed-based governance framework and that consolidation, as proposed, risks diminishing local accountability, service responsiveness, and undermines outcomes on provincial priorities.

Port Hope is an active growth community within the GRCA watershed. Our planning approvals depend on timely, locally informed advice on natural hazards, permitting, and pre-consultation. GRCA consistently meets or exceeds provincial service standards and already participates in regional staff-sharing efforts that deliver the efficiencies the Province seeks. These front-line services are integral to advancing housing supply, infrastructure delivery, and climate resilience in our community.

We respectfully support the following positions in the GRCA Board resolution:

- **Opposition** to the proposed "Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration and its associated administrative scale, which

would dilute municipal partnership and local watershed knowledge and impose substantial transition costs and delays.

- **Support** for modernization measures through digital applications, permitting, consistent policies/technical guidelines, updated flood standards, and fee harmonization; without structural consolidation.
- **Request** that Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) engage directly with affected municipalities and conservation authorities across Eastern Lake Ontario through a working group.
- **Request** to pause consolidation while meaningful consultation and detailed evaluation occur.

Accordingly, the Municipality of Port Hope ask MECP to:

- 1) **Pause** any consolidation decisions under ERO 025-1257 until at least after the current consultation period (closing December 22, 2025) and completion of a facilitated working group process with affected municipalities and Conservation Authorities.
- 2) **Publish**, prior to any decision, the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) business case and cost-benefit analysis, a multi-year cost model (capital and operating), and a commitment that OPCA and transition costs will not be recovered from municipal levies.
- 3) **Release** the proposed municipal representation formula and rural/agricultural participation mechanisms for consultation, with a guarantee that no municipality loses direct representation.
- 4) **Advance** a focused modernization track within the existing watershed-based framework, emphasizing province-wide technical guidance, digital permitting, and measurable service-level commitments tied to housing and infrastructure timelines.
- 5) **Enact** asset-protection provisions so Conservation Authority assets funded by municipalities remain with the watershed and cannot be transferred or liquidated under Conservation Authorities Act (CAA) winding-up powers without compensation and municipal consent (reference CAA s.35.20).
- 6) **Establish** safeguards to protect the retention of local Conservation Authority offices and pre-consultation capacity; transition funding; no cost-shifting to municipalities; and clarity on levy apportionment/assets.

The Municipality of Port Hope welcomes the opportunity to participate in a working group with MECP, GRCA, and neighbouring municipalities and Conservation Authorities to co-design practical improvements that achieve provincial objectives while preserving effective local delivery.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Olena Hankvisky', written in a cursive style.

Olena Hankvisky, Mayor

Encl: Resolution No. 237-2025

Cc: All Northumberland Municipalities
County of Northumberland
GRCA