

November 26, 2025

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

Via email: minister.mecp@ontario.ca

Dear Honourable Minister McCarthy:

Please be advised that Council for the Township of Southwold, at its Regular Meeting on Monday November 24, 2025 passed the following resolution:

Conservation Authority Consolidation Resolution

2025-349 Councillor Fellows – Deputy Mayor Pennings

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 Corporation of the Township of Southwold established the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority and Kettle Creek Conservation Authority;

AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide over 50% of total conservation authority funding;

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 acres of land, much of which was donated by local residents and

entrusted to conservation authorities as a personal legacy for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good, with the expectation that such lands would be cared for by locally governed conservation authorities;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, a Crown corporation that would assume governance responsibilities and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities, with municipal cost apportionment yet to be defined;

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;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Southwold calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipal[y 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 FURTHER THAT while the Corporation of the Township of Southwold supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, 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 Corporation of the Township of Southwold 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 a copy of this resolution be sent to the Ontario Minister of Environment, Conservation, and Parks, to the local MP and MPPs, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Rural Ontario

Municipal Association, and all municipalities and Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

CARRIED

Yours truly,



June McLarty
Deputy Clerk

Cc: The Honourable Andrew Lawton, MP Elgin-Middlesex-London, via email
The Honourable Rob Flack, MPP Elgin-Middlesex-London, via email
The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, via email
The Rural Ontario Municipal Association, via email
Ontario Municipalities, via email
Mark Peacock, Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority, via email
Elizabeth VanHooren, Kettle Creek Conservation Authority, via email