

 Corporate Services Department Legislative Services Division	
Date & Time Received:	January 02, 2026 11:01 am
Original To:	CIP
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Notes/Comments:	

December 18, 2025

**Re: Township of Chatsworth Resolution:
Proposed Changes to Conservation Authorities in Ontario**

Please be advised at Township of Chatsworth Council held on December 17, 2025 the following resolution was carried:

THAT CAO Clerk’s Report 2025-29 be hereby received for information; and

WHEREAS the Conservation Authorities Act 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 Grey and Bruce Counties established the North Grey Region Conservation Authority in 1957 and the Sauble Valley Conservation Authority in 1958 which amalgamated into the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) in 1985; and

WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide approximately 44% of total GSCA funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 7%; 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 or sold 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 whose objects include overseeing conservation authorities and the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for conservation authorities in Ontario with municipal cost contribution yet to be defined; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks has posted 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; and

WHEREAS under this proposal, the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) would be consolidated into a new “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” that is over 23,000 square kilometres in size and consists of 80 municipalities; and

WHEREAS the Province already has the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations and standards through the Conservation Authorities Act and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks to address issues related to permitting, by establishing guidance, online permitting platforms and technical standards through legislation that could help build homes; and

WHEREAS the GSCA has already undertaken significant modernization work aligned with provincial objectives, including Information Technology / Information Management, and leveraging technology to streamline planning and permit review processes processing 100% of major permits within the provincial timelines in 2024.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT the Township of Chatsworth 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 Township of Chatsworth does not support the proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257 as the proposal lacks sufficient justification, would significantly diminish local governance, and fails to recognize the effectiveness and efficiencies already achieved within existing watershed-based models; and

THAT the Township of Chatsworth affirms that large-scale regional consolidation is unnecessary, would introduce substantial transition costs, and would divert resources away from frontline watershed programs. The Council further asserts that restructuring at this scale would erode local decision-making, weaken municipal accountability, and disrupt long-standing community partnerships that are central to delivering responsive watershed management; and

THAT while the Township of Chatsworth supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down approach 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

THAT the Township of Chatsworth requests a funding framework to be provided to member municipalities on what the financial model will look like for Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) moving forward. Chatsworth further calls on the Province to clarify what commitments they will make in terms of funding the current costs of CA's along with any unexpected costs that could come with this significant of a transition and change; and

THAT the Township of Chatsworth urges the Province to strengthen centralized standards, resources, and tools rather than undertaking broad structural amalgamation and to provide sustainable, predictable provincial funding across conservation authorities to enable local CAs to advance ongoing digitization and systemization work that has already resulted in improved efficiency and consistency in recent years; and

THAT the Township of Chatsworth believes that the Province's proposed new online permitting portal can be implemented within the existing conservation authority framework without requiring structural amalgamation; and

THAT the Township of Chatsworth requests that the Ministry engage meaningfully and collaboratively with affected municipalities, conservation authorities, and local First Nations before advancing any consolidation, to ensure that any changes reflect both local needs and the practical realities of implementation; and

THAT this resolution be included in the Municipality's ERO response and forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, all of Ontario's municipalities, MPPs, conservation authorities, AMO, and Conservation Ontario.

Should you require additional information please contact the undersigned at 519-794-3232 ex. 134 or tyler.zamostny@chatsworth.ca.

Sincerely,



Tyler Zamostny
Deputy Clerk