

December 18, 2025

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Date & Time Received:	January 02, 2026 11:39 am
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RE: ONTARIO PROVINCIAL CONSERVATION AGENCY (BILL 68) AND PROPOSED REGIONAL CONSOLIDATION OF ONTARIO'S CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES (ERO# 025-1257)

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) Board of Directors is pleased to have endorsed the report on the [Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency \(Bill 68\) and Proposed Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities \(ERO# 025-1257\)](#) at its meeting on November 28, 2025 adopting Resolution A#155/25 as follows:

WHEREAS on November 6, 2025, Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 was introduced into the legislature and proposes to amend, among other Acts, the Conservation Authorities Act to create the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (the Agency);

AND WHEREAS the Agency would be a provincial board-governed agency to provide centralized leadership, efficient governance, strategic direction, and oversight of Ontario's conservation authorities;

AND WHEREAS on November 7, 2025, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) posted "Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities" for public comment on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO# 025-1257) for a 45-day period ending December 22, 2025;

AND WHEREAS the Agency would oversee the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for authorities in Ontario;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT;

TRCA supports the province’s proposal to keep TRCA’s watershed boundaries and TRCA Board governance structure intact;

TRCA requests that the proposed re-naming of TRCA to Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Agency be abandoned;

That all costs of the new Agency and the proposed regional consolidation and with any transition be entirely borne by the Province;

That TRCA staff continue to participate in the consultation to provide TRCA’s advice on best practices from our experience successfully delivering programs as Ontario’s most highly populated CA;

That this report on the Agency and ERO# 025-1257 be received and that any comments from the Board of Directors help inform TRCA’s final submission to the ERO;

AND FURTHER THAT the Clerk and Manager, Policy, so advise TRCA’s partner municipalities and Conservation Ontario.

This report provides an overview of the proposed amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act in Schedule 3 of Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 to create the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) and an analysis of the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks’ (MECP) posting of the “Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario’s conservation authorities” on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO# 025-1257).



A copy of the report and appendices are enclosed for your convenience. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Laurie Nelson, Director, Policy Planning at Laurie.Nelson@trca.ca or (437) 880-2282.

Sincerely,

Joanne Hyde
Clerk and Manager, Policy

cc. John MacKenzie, Chief Executive Officer, TRCA
Laurie Nelson, Director, Policy Planning, TRCA
Angela Coleman, Conservation Ontario, acoleman@conservationontario.ca
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[Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency \(Bill 68\) and Proposed Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities \(ERO# 025-1257\)](#)

[Attachment 1: Map of Proposed 7 Regional Conservation Authorities](#)

[Attachment 2: Map of Proposed Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority \(TRCA\)](#)

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Friday, November 28, 2025 Meeting

FROM: John MacKenzie, Chief Executive Officer

RE: **ONTARIO PROVINCIAL CONSERVATION AGENCY
(BILL 68) AND PROPOSED REGIONAL
CONSOLIDATION OF ONTARIO’S CONSERVATION
AUTHORITIES (ERO# 025-1257)**

KEY ISSUE

To provide an overview of the proposed amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act in [Schedule 3](#) of [Bill 68](#), Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 to create the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) and an analysis of the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks’ (MECP) posting of the “[Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario’s conservation authorities](#)” on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO# 025-1257) for a commenting period ending December 22, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION:

WHEREAS on November 6, 2025, Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 was introduced into the legislature and proposes to amend, among other Acts, the Conservation Authorities Act to create the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (the Agency);

AND WHEREAS the Agency would be a provincial board-governed agency to provide centralized leadership, efficient governance, strategic direction, and oversight of Ontario’s conservation authorities;

AND WHEREAS on November 7, 2025, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) posted “Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario’s conservation authorities” for public comment on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO# 025-1257) for a 45-day period ending December 22, 2025;

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AND WHEREAS the Agency would oversee the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for authorities in Ontario;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT;

TRCA supports the province's proposal to keep TRCA's watershed boundaries and TRCA Board governance structure intact;

TRCA requests that the proposed re-naming of TRCA to Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Agency be abandoned;

That all costs of the new Agency and the proposed regional consolidation and with any transition be entirely borne by the Province;

That TRCA staff continue to participate in the consultation to provide TRCA's advice on best practices from our experience successfully delivering programs as Ontario's most highly populated CA;

That this report on the Agency and ERO# 025-1257 be received and that any comments from the Board of Directors help inform TRCA's final submission to the ERO;

AND FURTHER THAT the Clerk and Manager, Policy, so advise TRCA's partner municipalities and Conservation Ontario.

BACKGROUND

On October 31, 2025, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation which, if passed, would amend the Conservation Authorities Act (CA Act) to create the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (Agency), a provincial board-governed agency to provide centralized leadership, efficient governance, strategic direction, and oversight of Ontario's conservation authorities.

Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency

Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 was introduced in the legislature on November 6, 2025. Schedule 3 of Bill 68 contains amendments to the CA Act to enable the creation of the OPCA (the Agency), including:

- Establishing the objects of the agency;
- Setting out the governance of the proposed agency;

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- Establishing tools for agency oversight of conservation authorities;
- Establishing provincial oversight of the agency; and
- Setting out sources of agency funding.

The proposed objects of the Agency are the following:

1. Oversee the governance of authorities and other aspects of authorities such as their operations, including the programs and services they provide, to further the purposes of the Act;
2. Oversee the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for authorities in Ontario;
3. Promote consistent policies, standards and fees for programs and services provided by authorities;
4. Assess and report on the effectiveness of authorities in furthering the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources in watersheds in Ontario, including outcomes related to the implementation of their programs and services;
5. Oversee and evaluate the financial performance of authorities to ensure their long-term operational and capital financial sustainability, including the financial sustainability of their programs and services required under section 21.1;
6. Guide and evaluate the strategic planning by authorities to ensure it aligns with provincial objectives;
7. Support the development and implementation of a standardized and centralized system for processing applications for permits issued by authorities;
8. Lead the development and implementation of digital strategies and shared services to support the operations of authorities, including their programs and services;
9. Support strategic investment in programs and services provided by authorities, including leveraging funding available to Ontario and authorities;
10. Advise the Government of Ontario in respect of the programs and services authorities provide under the Act and any matters related to the objects of the agency; and
11. Any other objects prescribed by regulation.

The proposed Agency will be board-governed with at least five and not more than 12 board members, with one Chair and up to two Vice Chairs, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. MECP will provide

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oversight of the Agency and will also retain policy responsibility for the CA Act and associated regulations. Where the Minister considers it to be in the public interest to do so, the Minister may issue directions to the Agency.

The Agency will provide province-wide coordination, strategic direction and oversight of Ontario's conservation authorities (CAs). Delivery of local programs and services would continue to be led by CAs. The Agency may issue directions and/or guidelines to one or more authorities to address matters such as key performance indicators, key results or service delivery targets, service standards, information technology, procurement, training of members and employees, budgeting, asset management plans and strategic planning.

The proposed Agency funding sources include provincial funding, fees for services and cost recovery from conservation authorities.

Bill 68 passed Third Reading on November 24, 2025, and most of the provisions of the Agency in the CA Act will come into effect upon Royal Assent.

Proposed Regional Consolidation of CAs (ERO# 025-1257)

On November 7, 2025, MECP posted a proposal on the Environmental Registry of Ontario ([ERO 025-1257](#)) seeking feedback on proposed boundaries for the consolidation Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional conservation authorities (Attachment 1), and the criteria applied to inform the proposed boundaries. The policy proposal notice includes maps depicting the proposed boundaries for the regional conservation authorities and discussion questions relevant to the planning for the future state. In the proposal, the watershed-based boundaries delineating TRCA's jurisdiction are proposed to remain the same with our name to change to Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority (Attachment 2).

No changes are proposed to the overall extent of conservation authority jurisdiction within the province, and under consolidation, the new regional conservation authorities would remain independent organizations operating with municipal governance and oversight, in accordance with requirements under the CA Act, as administered by MECP.

In addition, the ERO posting notes that the important work that conservation authorities do to protect people and property from the risks of

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flooding and other natural hazards will not change. The regional conservation authorities would continue to fulfill provincially mandated programs such as drinking water source protection under the Clean Water Act, regulating, development and other activities in areas at risk of natural hazards like flooding and erosion (e.g. floodplains, shorelines, watercourse and wetlands), flood forecasting and warning, and managing their lands and recreational trails so that Ontarians have access to local natural areas and outdoor activities.

The posting also indicates that regional conservation authorities would continue to provide municipal and other watershed programs and services set out under the CA Act such as tree planting, data collection, restoration and other integrated watershed management activities that enhance the resilience of local watersheds and educate and engage local communities.

The ERO posting lists the following questions to assist in receiving feedback and planning for the future state:

- What do you see as key factors to support a successful transition and outcome of regional conservation authority consolidation?
- What opportunities or benefits may come from a regional conservation authority framework?
- Do you have suggestions for how governance could be structured at the regional conservation authority level, including suggestions around board size, make-up and the municipal representative appointment process?
- Do you have suggestions on how to maintain a transparent and consultative budgeting process across member municipalities within a regional conservation authority?
- How can regional conservation authorities maintain and strengthen relationships with local communities and stakeholders?

MECP Virtual Information Session

On November 18, 2025, MECP held a virtual information session for CAs to provide an overview of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency and the proposed regional consolidation of CAs. MECP indicated that the Agency is intended to provide province-wide coordination, shared digital and technical resources, and consistent practices that strengthen the work of regional conservation authorities.

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CAs were advised that MECP and the Office of the Chief Conservation Executive will consider all feedback received during the consultation on the proposed boundaries for regional consolidation and to inform the proposed path forward. MECP will undertake further consultation at a future date on any additional proposed legislative and regulatory changes needed to enable regional consolidation.

The new Agency would lead the transition to regional CAs with CA, municipal and stakeholder involvement, including providing guidance support through the consolidation process. Changes are not intended to be initiated until after municipal elections in October 2026. Existing Board members would continue to serve until the expiration of their terms next year.

MECP Regional Engagement Session

MECP also advised during the Information Session that dates for regional meetings for municipalities and CAs, based on the proposed structure, would be forthcoming to receive feedback.

On November 25, 2025, TRCA's CEO received an invitation from MECP to attend an in-person Regional Engagement Session to be held on Monday, December 1, 2025, with a request to limit participation to a maximum of two delegates from our organization. Per the invitation, this engagement session will provide an opportunity for municipalities and conservation authorities to receive an overview of the proposal and participate in facilitated discussions.

RATIONALE

Proposed Response to ERO# 025-1257

On the basis of TRCA's understanding to date of Schedule 3 of Bill 68, the details in the ERO posting and the virtual MECP Information Session, the following are the key messages TRCA proposes to incorporate in our submission to the ERO, subject to input received from the Board of Directors.

Criteria - Regional consolidation of CAs

The ERO posting sets out the criteria used to determine the proposed Regional CA boundaries, which includes maintaining watershed-based

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jurisdictions, relationships between conservation authorities and municipalities, balancing expertise and capacity across conservation authorities and service continuity.

As already noted, TRCA's watershed boundaries are proposed to remain the same in the new regional CA framework but with our name proposed to change to Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority (Attachment 2). Since the release of the legislation and posting, TRCA's CEO has been speaking with officials at the Province involved in this process, including the Chief Conservation Executive, and expressed appreciation for keeping our watershed boundaries intact in the current proposal. In doing so, the criteria that are so critical and foundational to TRCA, (e.g., watershed-based, municipal, local community and stakeholder partnerships, service continuity, informed by science, etc.) will be preserved and avoid disruption to the delivery of the high-quality programs and services to our municipalities and communities that TRCA serves.

TRCA has also communicated concerns about the financial impact associated with our proposed name change. Based upon a preliminary analysis, renaming would result in substantial costs and staff time to implement across the organization (e.g., communications, brand identity, digital/information technology, cybersecurity, finance and administration, legal and property services, rebranding of facilities, parks, physical assets, uniforms, etc.). Given the fiscal and brand identity implications, TRCA recommends that our current name be retained.

Future State: Governance and Budget Process

The questions in the ERO posting are also seeking feedback on matters related to governance, transparent and consultative budget process and community and stakeholder relationships to inform the successful transition and outcome of the proposed regional CA framework. In this regard, as TRCA is proposed to remain intact as a regional CA, albeit with a proposed name change, it is recommended that our current governance structure of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee (with delegated powers of the Board), Board subcommittees, and current comprehensive, consultative and transparent budgeting process also remain intact to support the continued operations and successful delivery of TRCA's programs, services and projects.

As indicated by MECP, changes are not intended to be initiated until after

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municipal elections in October 2026 and existing Board members would continue to serve until the expiration of their terms next year. It is anticipated that much of the work related to governance in the new RCA structure will occur in the next phase of MECP's consultation process involving legislative and regulatory changes to enable the regional consolidation.

Implications of Regional Consolidation to Source Protection Regions

Further clarification is required on how the proposed consolidation of 36 conservation authorities into seven regional conservation authorities (RCA) will impact existing Source Protection Regions (SPR), source protection authority boards, source protection committees, assessment reports, work planning structure, etc.

The Credit Valley – Toronto and Region – Central Lake Ontario (CTC) Source Protection Region (SPR) consists of three Source Protection Areas (SPA): Credit Valley SPA (CVSPA), Toronto and Region SPA (TRSPA) and Central Lake Ontario SPA (CLOSPA). The current ERO proposal will place the three CTC Region CAs into parts of three regional CAs. CVC will be consolidated into the Western Lake Ontario RCA and CLOCA will be consolidated into the Eastern Lake Ontario RCA. In the current CTC SPR, CVC is the lead source protection authority and CLOCA provides the file management system for the CTC SPR. CTC staff are undertaking an analysis of the implications of the ERO proposal on the CTC SPR and will be reporting to the Source Protection Committee at their meeting on December 10, 2025.

Legal, Corporate and Administrative Implications

TRCA's understanding of the legal, corporate, and administrative implications of the legislative changes and ERO proposal are ongoing and subject to further analysis to determine financial implications. We have not received clarification on whether the Province will cover costs associated with the new proposed boundary changes (if at the outcome of the consultation they impact TRCA) and TRCA's proposed name change. At this point, and without clarification that costs will be entirely covered by the Province, TRCA staff have identified potential negative financial impacts of this proposal. For example, even though our watershed boundaries are proposed to stay intact, as noted earlier, estimated costs for the proposed name change from TRCA to Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority are extensive. These working estimates of financial impacts can

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be discussed in Closed Session.

Other immediate areas of concern that have arisen from reviewing the legislation and ERO questions relate to the potential financial risk or pressure posed by the powers granted for the Agency which include raising or levying funds from CAs. This is of particular concern as TRCA receives extremely limited stable funding from the Province (on average less than 400k per year of Section 39 CA Act related funding) and is already facing significant financial pressure related to delivering on its provincially mandated functions such as protecting wetlands and natural hazards. TRCA's financial situation related to protecting the provincial interest is also worsening due to the development fee freeze imposed by the Province for the last three years. In addition, TRCA also manages extensive provincial land holdings at a growing cost to TRCA and its municipalities. Any levy that might come from this new provincial agency would only increase these financial pressures to TRCA and its municipal partners.

While the current ERO proposal mapping shows TRCA's watershed boundaries as remaining intact, we understand neighbouring CA's have resolved to oppose their proposed consolidation. If the Province decided to enlarge or change TRCA's boundaries in response to opposition by other CA's or based on stakeholder input received during this consultation, such a change would result in extensive human resource, and corporate and administrative costs to TRCA and partner CAs that have not been budgeted for. Work underway on potential costs and human resource impacts can be discussed further in Closed Session.

The ERO posting notes that the newly created Agency plans to focus on service delivery targets, service standards, information technology, procurement, training of members and employees, budgeting, asset management plans, and strategic planning. TRCA is already high performing or is in the latter stages of modernization work in these areas. Therefore, it would be challenging to understand how the Province could justify levying TRCA in these areas where consolidation is not proposed and where corporate sophistication (e.g., municipally supported budget processes, updated asset management plans, multi-year strategic plan, modern corporate policies and systems, onboarding and learning programs, etc.) is already in place. For example, TRCA's accomplishments including Certificate of Recognition (COR) certification and GTA Top Employer and Greenest Employer recognition along with high performance

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on permitting, program and project delivery are often recognized as best practices in the CA, municipal, and government agency sector.

The Agency will have a Board structure and can with Ministerial support also direct a change in TRCA Board governance. TRCA's Board has been well-established to represent its diverse municipalities and a population of over 5 million people living within TRCA's jurisdiction. TRCA's Board structure, Executive Committee, subcommittees and working groups (e.g., BILD/Industry Working Group) have been tailored to address the needs of our municipal, agency, community and industry partners. TRCA's existing governance structure that has been established over time reflects previous historic watershed consolidations and works well for our municipalities and agency partners. TRCA staff will be requesting the Province to keep TRCA's governance structure intact. Lastly, with the new Agency Board structure as outlined in the legislation, TRCA staff will be suggesting that the Province consider how municipalities in TRCA's jurisdiction would be represented on this new Agency Board.

Relationship to TRCA's 2023-2034 Strategic Plan

This report supports the following Pillars and Outcomes set forth in TRCA's 2023-2034 Strategic Plan:

Pillar 1 Environmental Protection and Hazard Management:

- 1.1 Deliver provincially mandated services pertaining to flood and erosion hazards

Pillar 2 Knowledge Economy:

- 2.4 Integrate environmental considerations and science into decision making

Pillar 3 Community Prosperity:

- 4.2 Provide and manage an efficient and adaptable organization

Pillar 4 Service Excellence:

- 4.3 Responsive relationships and a trusted brand with a reputation for excellence

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Staff are engaged in the policy analysis work per the normal course of duty, with funding support provided by TRCA's participating municipalities to account 120-12. No additional funding is proposed to support the policy analysis work associated with the preparation of these comments.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Staff are undertaking the following next steps:

- Receive input from the Board of Directors at this meeting and any follow up discussions to help inform TRCA's submission to the ERO;
- Attend the MECP Regional Engagement Session on December 1, 2025;
- Participate in ongoing engagement with Conservation Ontario, CAs, CTC SPAs, municipal partners and stakeholders, etc.;
- Finalizing TRCA's submission to MECP in response to the ERO; and
- Continue to inform the Board of Directors on any outcomes of engagement meetings with MECP on any new or other provincial initiatives related to the Agency or implementation of the Regional consolidation of CAs.

Report prepared by: John MacKenzie, Chief Executive Officer, Laurie Nelson, Director, Policy Planning

Email: john.mackenzie@trca.ca; laurie.nelson@trca.ca

For Information contact John MacKenzie

Email: john.mackenzie@trca.ca

Date: November 26, 2025

Attachments: 2

Attachment 1: Map of Proposed 7 Regional Conservation Authorities

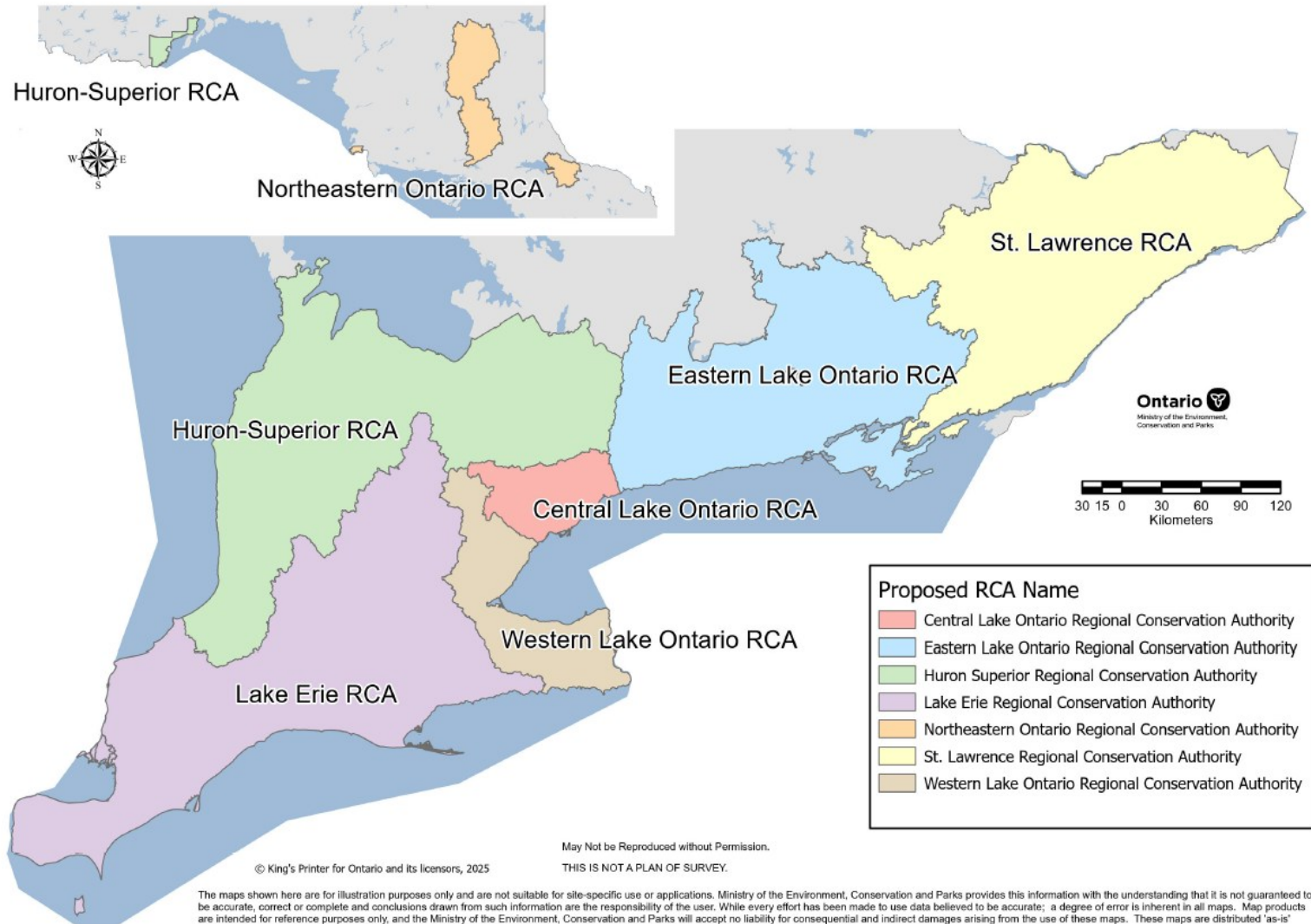
Attachment 2: Map of Proposed Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA)

ATTACHMENT 1: Map of Proposed 7 Regional Conservation Authorities

Maps

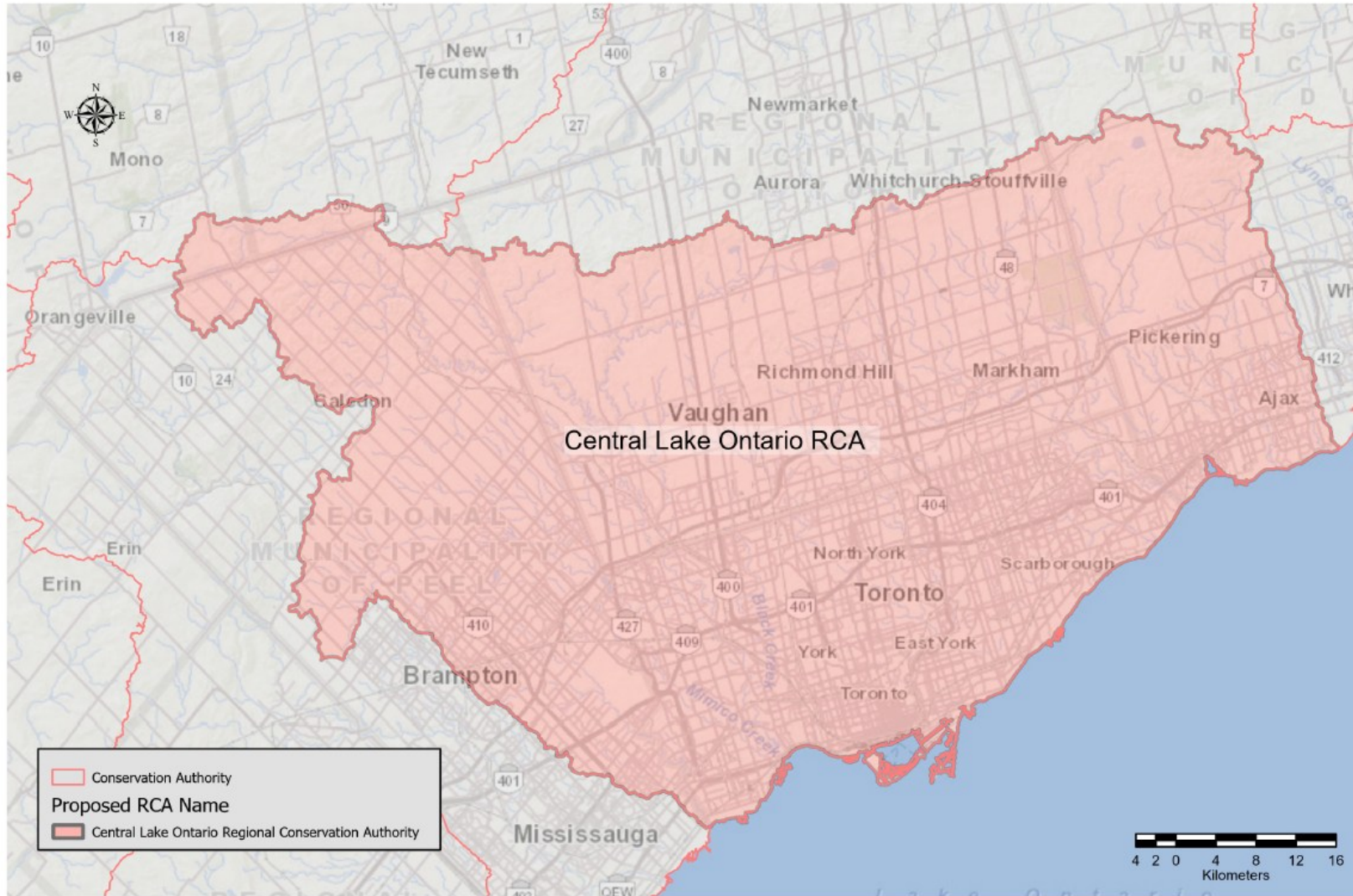
Map of Proposed Regional Conservation Authorities

PROPOSED 7 REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES (RCA)



ATTACHMENT 2: Map of Proposed Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA)
 Map of Proposed Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

CENTRAL LAKE ONTARIO REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



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