



Finn MacDonald
Policy Officer, Natural Resources Conservation Policy Branch
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
300 Water Street
Peterborough Ontario
K9J 8M5

June 29, 2017

Dear Mr. MacDonald:

Re: Proposed amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act (CAA)* as part of Bill 139, the Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017 (EBR#013-0561) and the CAA Review Decision Document *Conserving our Future: A Modernized CAA* (EBR#012-7583)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Proposed amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* as part of Bill 139, the Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017 (EBR#013-0561). Conservation Ontario represents Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities (CAs) and this letter was endorsed at the June 26, 2017 Conservation Ontario Council meeting.

Conservation Ontario (CO) acknowledges the efforts of staff from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) who met with CO staff over the past year to discuss our recommendations.

The Province's proposed changes (as expressed in Bill 139 and in the *Conserving Our Future: A Modernized Conservation Authorities Act*) address five key priorities identified and promoted by CO and the Conservation Authorities throughout the consultation stages. Specifically, they:

1. confirm the broad and important role of Conservation Authorities (CAs) as valuable watershed-based natural resource managers in Ontario;
2. have a commitment to explore options for updating provincial funding levels for existing provincially-mandated programs such as natural hazards and potentially new programs such as wetland conservation and climate change mitigation, adaptation, and, resilience;

3. establish a multi-ministry table to ensure increased coordination among provincial ministries regarding the wide range of support CAs provide to the multiple ministries;
4. require CAs to meet public sector best management practices and standards; and,
5. establish a multi-stakeholder Service Delivery Review Committee to address client service issues.

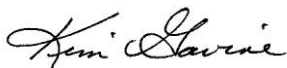
Overall, Conservation Ontario supports movement forward on the Government's proposed actions to modernize the CAA and the policy framework that will:

1. Strengthen Oversight and Accountability,
2. Increase Clarity and Consistency in Programs and Services,
3. Increase Clarity and Consistency In Regulatory Requirements,
4. Enhance Collaboration and Engagement, and,
5. Modernize Funding Mechanisms.

Conservation Ontario supports the leadership demonstrated by the Province in addressing the need to modernize the *Conservation Authorities Act* and encourages the Government to move forward in the Fall Legislature with amendments to the Act.

We appreciate the acknowledgement that Conservation Authorities play an important role in addressing today's environmental and resource management challenges. We look forward to working with MNRF and other ministries and stakeholders to implement the outcomes of the *Conservation Authorities Act* review. Should you have any questions regarding the above comments please contact myself (ext. 231) or Bonnie Fox (Manager, Policy and Planning) at (ext. 223).

Sincerely,



Kim Gavine
General Manager

c.c. All Conservation Authorities' CAOs

Conservation Ontario
120 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket ON L3Y 3W3
Tel (905) 895-0716 Fax (905) 895-0751
www.conservationontario.ca