

Resolution No.

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 consolidate Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities to seven Regional Conservation Authorities as part of a broader restructuring that would create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide centralized oversight and direction under the Conservation Authorities Act; and

WHEREAS under this proposal, the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA) would be consolidated into a new "Northeastern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority" together with the:

- Nickel District Conservation Authority (Conservation Sudbury)
- Mattagami Region Conservation Authority
- Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority

to form a single fragmented organization stretching from Sault Ste. Marie north to Timmins and southeast to Mattawa. The combined area of jurisdiction would only cover approximately 23% of that geographical extent; and

WHEREAS the NBMCA Board acknowledges and supports the Province's goals of improved efficiency of watershed management, through the implementation of a digital application and permitting system, consistent policies, flood standards, and technology; and

WHEREAS consistent policies and resources across the existing Conservation Authorities could be achieved without structural consolidation through direction and tools such as technical guidelines provided by MECP, and the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA), and Conservation Ontario; and

WHEREAS Conservation Authorities are locally based, grassroots organizations formed by municipal governments in response to the challenges posed by a changing climate and landscape, especially the increased exposure to flooding and erosion hazards and the resulting risks to life and property. In the case of NBMCA, supported by its ten member municipalities, this has proven successful for more than 50 years; and

WHEREAS asking municipalities to fund costs while simultaneously reducing their influence is untenable. The costs will divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay desired outcomes. Consolidation will result in substantial transition costs, including:

- IT and data system integration
- HR and union harmonization

- Staff salary alignment
- Fee and policy alignment
- Corporate service model consolidation
- Rebranding and signage
- Legal transitions, including title changes
- Asset, risk and liability assessment

WHEREAS substantial time and effort will be required to complete all aspects of consolidation. In all facets, that would divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay desired outcomes. Further, it will cause the loss of local watershed knowledge, community identity and relationships, which will add greater uncertainty, loss of trust, and create delays for our watershed residents. This includes the agricultural community, businesses, builders, developers, partners and our municipal partners that seek timely and effective local advice, which is provided through local consultations.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority Board of Directors:

1. Formally opposes the proposed Conservation Authority consolidation as they pertain to the NBMCA and their member municipalities as outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257; and
2. Urges the Province of Ontario to maintain the existing watershed-based governance structure, which ensures local accountability, comprehensive hazard management, and effective environmental protection; and
3. Requests meaningful consultation with municipalities, Indigenous communities, and Conservation Authority boards prior to any legislative or structural changes affecting watershed management in Ontario; and

FURTHER THAT the NBMCA Board of Directors direct staff to make a submission to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultation asking the Province to pause any consolidation until more consultation can take place; and

THAT copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, local Members of Provincial Parliament, our local watershed municipalities.

Date:

Moved by:

Seconded by: