



# Media Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Phase 1 Regulations for the *Conservation Authorities Act* Are Finalized by the Province**

**NEWMARKET, ONTARIO (October 8, 2021)** The Province has released Phase 1 regulations designed to implement amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CA Act) and many of Conservation Ontario's key concerns and challenges identified during the consultations have been addressed including extended implementation timelines and inclusion of passive recreation activities as a mandatory program and service.

"We are appreciative of the Minister and his officials' willingness to listen and respond to Conservation Ontario's and other stakeholder suggestions," stated Andy Mitchell, Chair of Conservation Ontario. Conservation Ontario represents Ontario's 36 conservation authorities.

Mr. Mitchell pointed out that the extended timelines are very necessary for conservation authorities and their member municipalities to establish funding agreements properly, and the general public will benefit from the additional support conservation areas' passive activities can receive as part of a mandatory program.

The regulations will now give conservation authorities until January 1, 2024, to complete the transition to a new budgetary framework with their municipalities. These extended timelines will provide sufficient time for conservation authorities to prepare a transition plan, finalize an inventory of programs and services, and enter into Memorandums of Understanding and/or Agreements with their participating municipalities.

The regulations were finalized with assistance from the provincially appointed multi-stakeholder Conservation Authorities Working Group, which includes Conservation Ontario and a number of conservation authorities (CAs) as well as representatives from the municipal, agricultural, and development sectors.

The Working Group has been meeting regularly with the Province since early this year to identify ways to effectively implement the proposed regulations.

"This was an opportunity for us to tackle the issues at hand through a multi-perspective lens and I wish to thank all members for their hard work and commitment to finding solutions," Mr. Mitchell said.

The purpose of the regulatory consultation was to ensure effective implementation of the regulations as well as to improve conservation authority transparency, accountability, and consistency. The provincial Working Group was established in late December 2020.

The Phase 1 consultations focused on details of the programs and services conservation authorities will implement and how they will be funded.

The Province will now consult on a second phase of the proposed regulations including details on municipal levies as well as standards for the delivery of other types of programs and services.

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