



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Government of Canada invests in the Great Lakes Coast to make coastal communities more climate-resilient

NEWMARKET, ON (January 20, 2025) Today, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, announced the allocation of \$ 4.1 million to pilot projects in the Great Lakes-St Lawrence Region over four years (2024-2027) from the [Climate-Resilient Coastal Communities \(CRCC\)](#) Program.

The impacts of climate change are greatly impacting coastal communities across Canada and Ontario. Decision-makers require enhanced tools to make sound and proactive decisions to protect people, property, and their local environment.

In Ontario, Conservation Ontario, together with Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities, have been working together with Federal, Provincial, and Municipal governments for over 80 years to build the tools and knowledge needed to make good decisions. This proactive approach makes Ontario a leader in minimizing risks to life and property, collectively saving Ontarians and Canadians billions of dollars in insured and uninsured losses.

However, with the pressures of a changing climate, more can be done, and more will be done.

Under the program, Conservation Ontario's partnered project *Adapting to Coastal Hazards Across the Great Lakes* received an allocation of \$3.1 million to co-develop regional-scale coastal resilience plans and actions. Three pilot areas on the southern Lake Huron, Western Lake Ontario, and Northern Lake Superior coasts are supported to bring strategies, tools and actions to protect their local communities from negative social, economic and environmental impacts.

This funding represents a crucial step forward, furthering collective actions to develop climate-resilient coastal communities in the Great Lakes. Key collaborative partners, Maitland Valley, Niagara Peninsula, and Lakehead Region Conservation Authorities, Great Lakes-St Lawrence Cities Initiative and Toronto Metropolitan University's Global Center for Climate Change and Transboundary Waters will co-develop with Conservation Ontario resources to help communities adapt to and mitigate climate change impacts.

"The Federal Government's decision to designate 8,400 km of Canadian Great Lakes shorelines as coastal areas underscores the importance of protecting local communities and property. By working together, we advance collaborative solutions to coastal hazards. Promoting a climate-resilient future while reinforcing Ontario's role as a key economic partner and the significance of this freshwater ecosystem are key priorities for Conservation Ontario", said Chris White, Chair of the Conservation Ontario Board of Directors, Mayor of Guelph/Eramosa, and Warden of Wellington County.

Quotes

"We are pleased that the Federal Government has supported Maitland Valley Conservation Authority so that we can assist our shoreline communities in developing transformative approaches for dealing with development at risk from shoreline erosion and the increasing impacts of a changing climate," said Ed McGugan, Chair of the Maitland Conservation Authority Board of Directors and Councillor of Township of Huron-Kinloss.

"The Lake Ontario Coastal Resilience Pilot Project represents a transformative step in advancing our collective response to climate change impacts along the shoreline. We thank the Government of Canada, Conservation Ontario, and our partner Conservation Authorities in Hamilton and Halton for their critical support. This project exemplifies the power of collaboration between Conservation Authorities and municipalities to protect and enhance our shared natural resources," said John Metcalfe, Chair of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Board of Directors and Councillor of Haldimand County

"On behalf of the Board of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, I would like to express our gratitude to the Federal Government for recognizing the shores of the Great Lakes as Coastal Areas and for their financial support of this crucial program. These funds will enable the LRCA and our Member Municipalities to strengthen local efforts, while also enhancing the collective response of Conservation Authorities to climate change at both the regional and provincial levels," said Donna Blunt, Chair of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Board of Directors and Councillor of the Municipality of Shuniah.

"The impacts associated with climate change are already being felt environmentally and economically in every single region of Canada, including in and around Ontario's Great Lakes. That is why this federal government is acting now to help our communities and our economy prepare for and protect against the threat of climate change. Conservation Ontario's project will support the vital long-term, community-based work to keep people safe now and into the future," said the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

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About Conservation Ontario

[Conservation Ontario](#) is a non-profit association that represents Ontario's 36 [Conservation Authorities](#). Conservation Authorities are community-based watershed management agencies whose mandate is to undertake watershed-based programs to protect people and property from flooding and other natural hazards and to conserve natural resources for economic, social, and environmental benefits. Conservation Authorities are legislated under *the Conservation Authorities Act, 1946*.

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