

Media Release

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Provincial Flood Management Strategy Recognizes the Broader Approach Needed to Manage the Impacts of Flooding in Ontario

Newmarket ON (March 9, 2020) Ontario's Flooding Strategy, just released by the Province in response to the Flood Advisor's 2019 Report, reinforces a commitment to protect people and property from the devastating and costly impacts of flooding. Conservation authorities (CAs) welcome the coordinated approach the Province proposes to build across ministries and in partnership with municipalities and CAs.

"We agree that an important aspect of managing the risk of flooding here in Ontario is building a multi-ministry approach. In addition to natural hazards management, Ontarians need activities such as infrastructure support, planning policy and regulations, as well as water monitoring in order to effectively address and reduce flooding impacts," said Kim Gavine, General Manager of Conservation Ontario. Conservation Ontario represents the 36 conservation authorities who play a key role in Ontario's flood management system.

The Flooding Strategy also calls for the update of existing natural hazard technical guidelines used to support municipal and conservation authority implementation of flood programs and activities which has been a key request of conservation authorities in consultations.

"There are a lot of important activities identified in the Flooding Strategy which we strongly support such as updating floodplain mapping, increasing public access to current and timely information, as well as better understanding the risks of flooding.

However, one piece of the puzzle that is missing is the discussion around resources," Gavine points out. "Cutting natural hazards provincial funding to conservation authorities in 2019 is very problematic and challenges many CAs and their municipalities to make up for the loss of revenue."

The cost of reducing flooding has to be shared. Ontario needs a funding formula which enables a mix of risk planning, watershed management, infrastructure updating and emergency response.

More floods, higher damage costs and increased business and utility disruptions are inevitable. Gavine says the Flooding Strategy signals that the Province understands the hardships that flooding can create for residents, government and businesses.

“Conservation authorities want to continue to support the Province as they have for many years. It makes good business sense to rely on CA flood management expertise and the watershed approach to deliver services and programs which make conservation authorities a very cost effective partner.”

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For more information:

Kim Gavine, General Manager, Conservation Ontario

905.895.0716 ext 231 (Cell) 905.251.3268 kgavine@conservationontario.ca

Jane Lewington, Marketing & Communication Specialist

905.895.0716 ext 222 (Cell) 905.717.0301 jlewington@conservationontario.ca

conservationontario.ca