



Corporation of the Municipality of Thames Centre  
4305 Hamilton Road, Dorchester, ON N0L 1G3 – Phone 519-268-7334 – fax 519-268-3928

November 27, 2020

Hon. Jeff Yurek  
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

By Email: jeff.yurek@pc.ola.org

**RE: REQUESTING ACTION BE TAKEN REGARDING NEW CHANGES TO ONTARIO'S CONSERVATION ACT**

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Dear Honourable Jeff Yurek,

At its regular meeting held on November 23, 2020, the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Thames Centre passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Province has introduced Bill 229, Protect, Support and Recover from COVID 19 Act - Schedule 6 – Conservation Authorities Act;

WHEREAS the Legislation introduces a number of changes and new sections that could remove and/or significantly hinder the conservation authorities' role in regulating development, permit appeal process and engaging in review and appeal of planning applications;

WHEREAS we rely on the watershed expertise provided by local conservation authorities to protect residents, property and local natural resources on a watershed basis by regulating development and engaging in reviews of applications submitted under the Planning Act;

WHEREAS the changes allow the Minister to make decisions without CA watershed data and expertise;

WHEREAS the Legislation suggests that the Minister will have the ability to establish standards and requirements for non-mandatory programs which are negotiated between the conservation authorities and municipalities to meet local watershed needs;

WHEREAS municipalities require a longer transition time to put in place agreements with conservation authorities for non-mandatory programs;

WHEREAS municipalities believe that the appointment of municipal representatives on CA Boards should be a municipal decision; and the Chair and Vice Chair of the CA Board should be duly elected;

WHEREAS the changes to the 'Duty of Members' contradicts the fiduciary duty of a CA board member to represent the best interests of the conservation authority and its responsibility to the watershed;

WHEREAS conservation authorities have already been working with the Province, development sector and municipalities to streamline and speed up permitting and planning approvals through Conservation Ontario's Client Service and Streamlining Initiative;

WHEREAS changes to the legislation will create more red tape and costs for the conservation authorities, and their municipal partners, and potentially result in delays in the development approval process;

AND WHEREAS municipalities value and rely on the natural habitats and water resources within our jurisdiction for the health and well-being of residents; municipalities value the conservation authorities' work to prevent and manage the impacts of flooding and other natural hazards; and municipalities value the conservation authority's work to ensure safe drinking water;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- THAT the Province of Ontario work with conservation authorities to address their concerns by repealing and/or amending changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and the Planning Act;
- AND THAT the Province of Ontario delay enactment of clauses affecting municipal concerns;
- AND THAT the Province of Ontario provide a longer transition period up to December 2022 for non-mandatory programs to enable coordination of CA municipal budget processes;
- AND THAT the Province respect the current conservation authority/municipal relationships;
- AND THAT the Province embrace their long-standing partnership with the conservation authorities and provide them with the tools and financial resources they need to effectively implement their watershed management role.

Carried.

Sincerely,



Alan Bushell  
Deputy Clerk  
Municipality of Thames Centre  
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519-268-7334 ext. 249

CC: Minister of Finance, the Honorable Rod Phillips, via e-mail  
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Honorable John Yakabuski, *via e-mail*