Special LRCA Board Meeting

Lakehead Region Conservation Authority
130 Conservation Road/Microsoft Teams
2025-12-16 16:00 - 18:00 EST

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Declaration: “The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority respectfully acknowledges that the lands on which we live and work are the traditional lands of the Anishinabek Nation and the traditional territory of Fort William First Nation, signatory to the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850.

As partners in the conservation and protection of the Lakehead Watershed along with First Nations communities, the Métis Nation of Ontario, and other Indigenous peoples, the LRCA is committed to the common vision of a healthy, safe and sustainable Lakehead Watershed."

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

THAT: the Agenda is adopted as published.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

4. CORRESPONDENCE.....3

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5. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

5.1. Review of proposed regional consolidation of conservation authorities ERO

Notice #025-1257

Mr. Hassaan Basit, Chief Conservation Executive of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency will be in attendance to discuss the proposed consolidation of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on January 28, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

THAT: the time being _____ p.m. AND FURTHER THAT there being no further business we adjourn.

MUNICIPALITY OF
SHUNIAH

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Resolution No.: 380-25

Date: Nov 25, 2025

Moved By: _____

Seconded By: _____

WHEREAS the Conservation Authorities Act (1946) enables municipalities to establish local conservation authorities, and when municipalities choose to form such authorities, they assume responsibility for governance and funding through the appointment of a Board of Directors and the provision of an annual levy to cover expenses;

AND WHEREAS the municipalities within Lakehead Region established the Neebing Valley Conservation Authority in 1954 which enlarged to the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) in 1963;

AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide approximately 50% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 5%;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have governed their respective conservation authorities for decades, tailoring programs and services to local watershed needs, maintaining accountable service standards, and ensuring fair and predictable costs for ratepayers;

AND WHEREAS conservation authorities collectively own and manage thousands of hectares of land, much of which was donated by local residents and entrusted to conservation authorities as a personal legacy for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good, with the expectation that such lands would be cared for by locally governed conservation authorities;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, a Crown corporation that would assume governance responsibilities and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities, with municipal cost apportionment yet to be defined;

AND WHEREAS the Province already possesses the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations, and standards through the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Municipality of Shuniah calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands;

AND THAT while the Municipality of Shuniah supports provincial goals for consistent permit approv processes, shared services, and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down agency structure

without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs;

AND THAT the Municipality of Shuniah supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity, and program delivery across the province, and requests that the Province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to determine the most effective level of strategic consolidation to achieve both provincial and local objectives;

AND THAT the Municipality of Shuniah is opposed to the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND THAT the Municipality of Shuniah recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the "Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority";

AND THAT the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics, local MPPs, local MPs, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Conservation Ontario, All local municipalities, and All Conservation Authorities in Ontario. + Premier Ford.

☑ **Carried** ☐ **Defeated** ☐ **Amended** ☐ **Deferred**

Wendy Landry

Signature

Municipality of Shuniah, 420 Leslie Avenue, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7A 1X8

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR

330 Highway 595, R.R. #1, Kakabeka Falls, Ontario P0T 1W0
Tel. (807) 476-1451 Fax (807) 473-0891
E-Mail - twpoconn@tbaytel.net www.oconnortownship.ca

Mayor
Jim Vezina

Clerk-Treasurer
Lorna Buob

Councillors
Alex Crane
Brendan Rea
John Sobolta
Carly Torkkeli

November 26, 2025

Honourable Todd McCarthy
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Macdonald Block Mailing Facility
77 Wellesley St W, 11th Fl
Toronto, ON
M7A 1N3 minister.mepc@ontario.ca

Dear Minister McCarthy:

Council, at their meeting held on November 24, 2025, passed a resolution calling on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, water-shed conservation authorities. The Township of O'Connor is opposed to the proposed Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority boundary configuration outlined in the Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257.

I have enclosed a copy of the resolution for your consideration and trust you will give it your full consideration and support.

Yours truly

Lorna Buob
Clerk-Treasurer

Encl.

Cc: Kevin Holland, MPP – Thunder Bay – Atikokan kevin.holland@pc.ola.gc
Lise Vaugeois, MPP, Thunder Bay – Superior North LVaugeois-QP@ndp.on.ca
Marcus Powlowski, MP – Thunder Bay – Rainy River marcus.powlowski@parl.gc.ca
Hon. Patty Hajdu – MP Thunder Bay – Superior North patty.hajdu@parl.gc.ca
Association of Municipalities of Ontario amo@amo.on.ca
Conservation Ontario bfox@conservationontario.ca
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority tammy@lakeheadca.com
All local municipalities
All Conservation Authorities in Ontario

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR
R. R. #1 KAKABEKA FALLS, ONTARIO POT 1W0

NOVEMBER 24, 2025 NO. 10

Moved by J. Sobolta

Seconded by C. Torkkeli

WHEREAS the Conservation Authorities Act (1946) enables municipalities to establish local conservation authorities, and when municipalities choose to form such authorities, they assume responsibility for governance and funding through the appointment of a Board of Directors and the provision of an annual levy to cover expenses;

AND WHEREAS the municipalities within Lakehead Region established the Neebing Valley Conservation Authority in 1954 which enlarged to the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) in 1963;

AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide approximately 50% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 5%;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have governed their respective conservation authorities for decades, tailoring programs and services to local watershed needs, maintaining accountable service standards, and ensuring fair and predictable costs for ratepayers;

AND WHEREAS conservation authorities collectively own and manage thousands of hectares of land, much of which was donated by local residents and entrusted to conservation authorities as a personal legacy for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good, with the expectation that such lands would be cared for by locally governed conservation authorities;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, a Crown corporation that would assume governance responsibilities and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities, with municipal cost apportionment yet to be defined;

AND WHEREAS the Province already possesses the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations, and standards through the Conservation Authorities Act and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Township of O'Connor calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands;

AND THAT while the supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down agency structure

without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs;

AND THAT the Township of O'Connor supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity, and program delivery across the province, and requests that the Province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to determine the most effective level of strategic consolidation to achieve both provincial and local objectives;

AND THAT the Township of O'Connor is opposed to the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND THAT the Township of O'Connor recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the "Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority";

AND THAT the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to:

- the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics;
- local Members of Provincial Parliament;
- local Members of Parliament;
- the Association of Municipalities of Ontario;
- Conservation Ontario;
- All local municipalities; and
- All Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

J. Vezina
MAYOR

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR

☒ CARRIED ☐ DEFEATED

RECORDED VOTE

Lora Brooks
CLERK-TREASURER

ALEX CRANE	☐	CARLY TORKKELI	☐
BRENDAN REA	☐	JIM VEZINA	☐
JOHN SOBOLTA	☐		

DORION TOWNSHIP
Canyon Country

170 Dorion Loop Road
Dorion, ON P0T 1K0
E –office@doriontownship.ca
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December 3, 2025

The Honourable Todd J. McCarthy
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
College Park, 5th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3

SENT VIA EMAIL - minister.mecp@ontario.ca

Dear Minister McCarthy:

Council, at their regular meeting held on December 2, 2025, passed a resolution calling on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, water-shed conservation authorities. The Township of Dorion is opposed to the proposed Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority boundary configuration outlined in the Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257.

I have enclosed a copy of the resolution for your consideration and trust you will give it your full consideration and support.

Yours truly

Mavis Harris
Clerk-Treasurer

Encl.

Cc: Kevin Holland, MPP - Thunder Bay - Atikokan — kevin.holland@pc.ola.org
Lise Vaugeois, MPP, Thunder Bay - Superior North — LVaugeois-QP@ndp.on.ca
Marcus Pawlowski, MP - Thunder Bay - Rainy River — marcus.powlowski@parl.gc.ca
Hon. Patty Hajdu - MP Thunder Bay - Superior North — patty.hajdu@parl.gc.ca
Association of Municipalities of Ontario — resolutions@amo.on.ca
Conservation Ontario — bfox@conservationontario.ca
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority — tammy@lakeheadca.com
All local municipalities
All Conservation Authorities in Ontario

The Corporation of the
TOWNSHIP OF DORION
DORION, ONTARIO
POT 1KO
TELEPHONE 807-857-2289
FAX 807-857-2203

Date: December 2, 2025

Resolution No. 25-290

Moved by .....

Seconded by .....

WHEREAS the *Conservation Authorities Act* (1946) enables municipalities to establish local conservation authorities, and when municipalities choose to form such authorities, they assume responsibility for governance and funding through the appointment of a Board of Directors and the provision of an annual levy to cover expenses;

AND WHEREAS the municipalities within Lakehead Region established the Neebing Valley Conservation Authority in 1954 which enlarged to the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) in 1963;

AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide approximately 50% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 5%;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have governed their respective conservation authorities for decades, tailoring programs and services to local watershed needs, maintaining accountable service standards, and ensuring fair and predictable costs for ratepayers;

AND WHEREAS conservation authorities collectively own and manage thousands of hectares of land, much of which was donated by local residents and entrusted to conservation authorities as a personal legacy for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good, with the expectation that such lands would be cared for by locally governed conservation authorities;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, a Crown corporation that would assume governance responsibilities and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities, with municipal cost apportionment yet to be defined;

AND WHEREAS the Province already possesses the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations, and standards through the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Township of Dorion calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands;

AND THAT while the Township of Dorion supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down agency structure without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs;

AND THAT the Township of Dorion supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity, and program delivery across the province, and requests that the Province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to determine the most effective level of strategic consolidation to achieve both provincial and local objectives;

AND that the Township of Dorion is opposed to the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND THAT the Township of Dorion recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the "Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority";

AND THAT the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to:

- the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics;
- local Members of Provincial Parliament;
- local Members of Parliament;
- the Association of Municipalities of Ontario;
- Conservation Ontario;
- All local municipalities; and
- All Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

.....

Reeve / Chair

Carried .....

Carried
(as amended) .....

Defeated .....

	YEAS	NAYS
REEVE		
R. Beatty		
COUNCILLOR		
D. Harris Shallow		
J. Mehagan		
D. Penner		
B. Cadeau		

CITY OF Thunder Bay
Superior by Nature

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

His Worship Mayor
KEN BOSHCOFF

500 Donald Street East
Thunder Bay, ON P7E 5V3
www.thunderbay.ca
Tel: (807) 625-3600

December 4, 2025

The Honourable Todd J. McCarthy
Minister of Environment, Conservation & Parks
Province of Ontario

RE: Submission to ERO 025-1257

- *Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities*

On behalf of the municipal council in Thunder Bay, this letter is shared for the information of the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks with respect to the proposed consolidation of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA).

The City of Thunder Bay is urging the provincial government to maintain local, municipally governed conservation authorities and to opposed consolidating LRCA into the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration as outlined in Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) Notice 025-1257.

This matter has been reviewed in Thunder Bay at the political level by both the Inter-Governmental Affairs Committee (IGAC) and City Council. Both groups have shared concerns as outlined in this letter. We remain committed to working with the Ministry to make changes where appropriate and in the best interest of our region.

Municipalities have historically established and governed conservation authorities under the *Conservation Authorities Act.* Municipalities within the Lakehead Region established the Neebing Valley Conservation Authority in 1954, which enlarged to become the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority in 1963. Local municipalities currently provide approximately 50% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 5%.

For decades LRCA has tailored programs and services to local watershed needs, maintained accountable service standards, and ensured fair and predictable costs for ratepayers. LCRA owns and manages extensive lands, much of which was donated by residents with the expectation of long-term protection, and locally guided stewardship in the hands of the local conservation authority. The LRCA is well managed, efficient and effective in the review and delivery of permits and works in consultation with the municipality on areas around the city that require conservation attention and management such as the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway. Further, significant reserve

funds have been managed by the LRCA to ensure appropriate care and protection is in place for the region, these funds have been collected from municipal residents and should be dedicated to community protection and watershed management here in Northwestern Ontario.

The City of Thunder Bay is open and ready to discuss with the province who already has authority, under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, to establish legislation, regulations, and standards without restructuring governance, as proposed.

Thank you in advance for consideration of the following resolution passed by City Council on December 2, 2025 and the specific concerns outlined with the proposal that are highlighted within the attachment.

> WITH RESPECT to the Memorandum from Councillor Trevor Giertuga, Chair – Inter-Governmental Affairs Committee, dated November 24, 2025, we recommend that City Council calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands;
>
> AND THAT while City Council supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down agency structure without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs;
>
> AND THAT City Council supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity, and program delivery across the province, and requests that the Province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to determine the most effective level of strategic consolidation to achieve both provincial and local objectives;
>
> AND THAT City Council is opposed to the proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;
>
> AND THAT City Council recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the “Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority”;
>
> AND THAT the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;

AND THAT careful consideration be given to the financial ownership of reserve funds that have been collected by the LRCA over many years, through municipal funding;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to:
- The Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations prior to the deadline of December 22, 2025,
- The Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and the Opposition critics,
- Local Members of Provincial Parliament,
- Local Members of Parliament,
- The Association of Municipalities of Ontario,
- Conservation Ontario,
- All local municipalities within the LRCA Area of Jurisdiction, and
- All Conservation Authorities in Ontario;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

Sincerely;

Mayor Ken Boshcoff
City of Thunder Bay

C.C. City Council
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Board
John Collin, City Manager
Krista Power, Director of Legislative Services & City Clerk
Tammy Cook, Executive Director, LRCA

Attachment: Background information provided by the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority

Attachment: Bill 68 and ERO Posting #025-1257: Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities

BACKGROUND:

Conservation Authorities deliver a range of services including natural hazard permitting and reviews, drinking water source protection, flood forecasting and warning, management of flood and erosion control infrastructure, low water response coordination, public access to conservation areas and trails, education, and implementation of restoration and resilience projects.

Conservation Ontario is the association of Ontario's Conservation Authorities.

Lakehead Region Conservation Authority:

The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) was formed in 1963 by an expansion of the Neebing Valley Conservation Authority which was constituted in 1954. The LRCA is one of 36 Conservation Authorities in the Province and one of five in northern Ontario. The LRCA does not abut another conservation authority and is the only Conservation Authority in northwestern Ontario. The LRCA area of jurisdiction includes the City of Thunder Bay, municipalities of Shuniah, Neebing and Oliver Paipoonge and the Townships of O'Connor, Conmee, Dorion and Gillies.

The LRCA owns **over 2,500 hectares of land and operates 10 Conservation Areas that are visited by over 500,000 people annually**. The LRCA also owns the bed and banks of the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway and conducts all monitoring and maintenance of the Floodway to ensure it delivers flood protection up to the magnitude of the Regional Storm.

The LRCA provides the following mandatory programs:

- Flood Forecasting and Warning,
- Low Water,
- Plan Review,
- Development Regulations,
- Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring,
- CA Owned Land Management,
- Operation of the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway,
- Victor Street Erosion Monitoring,
- Natural Hazard Mapping and Source Water Protection.

Non-Mandatory programs provided by the LRCA include: GIS mapping service and water quality sampling on Mosquito and Pennock Creek (fee for service); and Stewardship and Education programming that are self funding with no municipal levy.

As part of the Development Regulations program, the LRCA staff on average issue permits in less than 5 days.

Bill 68 and ERO Posting #025-1257: Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities

The LRCA is funded approximately 50% by municipal levy, 5% by provincial funding and 45% by self-generated revenue and other external funding that staff apply for and secure annually (programs and projects vary year to year).

The LRCA owns land and provides programming beyond the area of jurisdiction of the LRCA in the Lakehead Watershed that benefits all of northwestern Ontario including:

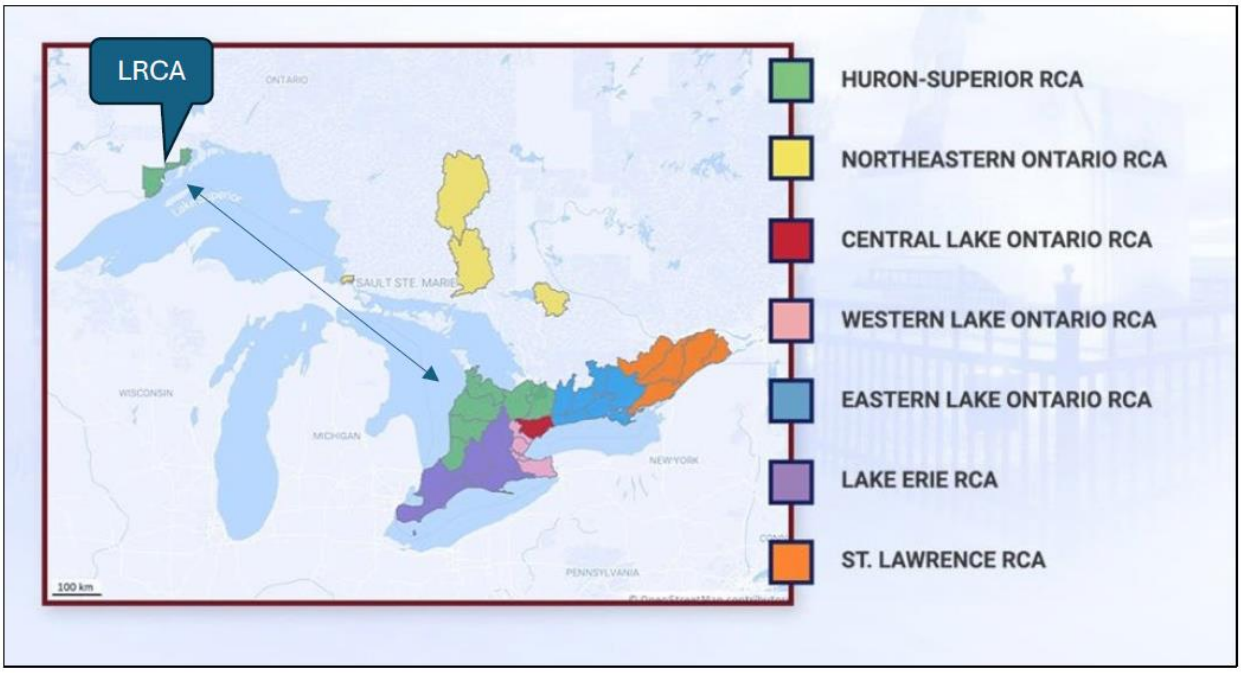
- sea lamprey control, invasive species management (i.e., phragmites, narrow-leaved cattail, etc.),
- participate in Lake Superior wide groups,
- grow northwestern Ontario native plants for projects in the north (Seeds for Conservation),
- Kam River Standing Advisory Committee,
- Blue-Green Algae research on Lake Superior,
- migratory bird habitat, species-at-risk monitoring,
- Boundary Waters Voyageur Waterway – Canadian Heritage River System proposed eastern section River Steward),
- access to and boat launches on Lake Superior, collaboration and support to neighbouring First Nation Communities,
- riparian habitat restoration, resource materials, access to educational programming (bird festival, etc.) and
- general promotion of conservation and protection of the watershed.

Proposed Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority

As outlined in ERO Posting #025-1257, the LRCA is proposed to merge into the Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority with a total of 80 municipalities and 7 conservation authorities. **The majority of the proposed area is 1,300 to 1,500 kilometres/14-16 hours from the LRCA**. After consolidation, all assets (i.e. land, etc.), reserves and debt will be merged into one Regional Conservation Authority; there will be one regional budget; and one regional board of directors.

Bill 68 and ERO Posting #025-1257: Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities

Proposed Regional Conservation Authorities:



LRCA Board of Director Position on Consolidation:

The consolidation of the LRCA within the Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority will result in a loss of local direction, governance and prioritization of northwestern Ontario specific pressures and issues. Without local representation, there will be a loss of control of budgeting, no connection to local councils and no understanding of local priorities.

The LRCA Board of Directors opposes the proposed LRCA consolidation with the Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority and will be recommending that the LRCA become its own region representing northwestern Ontario.

Northern Ontario Large Urban Mayors
NOLUM

4 December 2025

The Honourable Todd McCarthy
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
5th Floor
777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Subject: Bill 68, Schedule 3 - Conservation Authority Amalgamations and Regional Boundaries

Dear Minister McCarthy,

We, the Northern Ontario Large Urban Mayors (NOLUM), are writing to provide feedback on the proposed consolidation of the northeastern Ontario conservation authorities and the regional boundaries envisioned.

As the Ministry-provided material correctly states, Conservation Authorities are organized based on watersheds. The proposed regional conservation authority boundaries for northeastern and northwestern Ontario do not align with this principle. The two proposed regional conservation authorities involving Northern Ontario are the only non-contiguous agglomerations of watersheds. This does not create the same efficiencies for the other regional conservation authorities.

We recognize that there are significant concerns regarding conservation authorities in Southern Ontario. Unfortunately, the solution proposed to address this Southern Ontario issue will create real and significant harm to a system that is functioning well in Northern Ontario.

The proposed regional boundaries cover vast, disconnected territories and include many small communities, leading to significant governance challenges. There are also huge financial considerations, as substantial reserves are set aside in our conservation authorities, paid for by residents, for future community infrastructure.

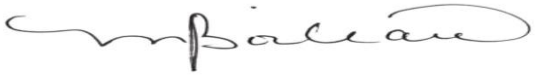
We are confident our conservation authorities will be happy to work collaboratively with the new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency and utilize the shared digital platforms, common standards, and technical resources envisioned.

Our conservation authorities are lean organizations that are accountable, transparent, and provide efficient permit approvals and community services. The proposed regional model for Northern Ontario will not eliminate red tape and has the distinct potential to result in the opposite outcome of increased bureaucracy. For Northern Ontario, this is a situation of, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

NOLUM looks forward to collaborative discussions that enable our conservation authorities to continue in their current form, recognize the geographic realities of Northern Ontario, and establish protocols that will enable them to meaningfully engage with the new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this feedback and look forward to working with your Ministry on this matter in the future.

Sincerely,



Michelle Boileau, Mayor of Timmins

Ken Boshcoff, Mayor of Thunder Bay

Peter Chirico, Mayor of North Bay

Paul Lefebvre, Mayor of Greater Sudbury

Matthew Shoemaker, Mayor of Sault Ste Marie

December 5, 2025

Hon. Todd McCarthy
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
College Park, 5th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister McCarthy,

Re: Concerns Regarding Proposed Consolidation of Regional Conservation Authorities (ERO 025-1257)

On behalf of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA), representing 37 municipalities across the Northwest, we are writing to express our **significant concerns** regarding the Province's proposed *Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority* boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257.

The proposal would consolidate the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) into a new regional entity located more than **1,500 kilometres away** from the Lakehead watershed and grouped with 72 Southern Ontario municipalities with whom our region shares **no watershed, geographic, or municipal connection**. This raises serious questions about the ability of any consolidated authority to effectively support and understand the unique environmental and watershed realities of Northwestern Ontario.

While NOMA acknowledges the Province's broader goals in reviewing and consolidating conservation authorities, we echo and support the position of the **LRCA Board of Directors**, who have clearly articulated that Northwestern Ontario's watershed characteristics, climate conditions, governance structures, and environmental management needs are fundamentally distinct from those in Southern Ontario. These differences must be recognized and respected in any future model.

For more than 70 years, the LRCA has provided knowledgeable, responsive, and locally grounded watershed management and frontline services to the Lakehead region. This expertise—deeply rooted in northern geography and hydrology—cannot be replicated through amalgamation with conservation authorities that have no shared watershed boundaries or regional context.

In alignment with the LRCA, NOMA supports the recommendation that the Province consider establishing a **stand-alone, independent Regional Conservation Authority for Northwestern Ontario** should consolidation proceed. A dedicated *Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation*

Authority would ensure watershed management remains connected to the realities and priorities of our region and maintains the local capacity needed to effectively support our municipalities.

We also echo the LRCA's request that the Ministry **engage directly with all affected Northwestern Ontario municipalities** before any consolidation boundaries are finalized. Meaningful municipal consultation is critical to ensuring that decisions reflect the needs, geography, and environmental priorities of the North.

NOMA encourages the Province to review ERO posting 025-1257 with careful consideration of these regional differences and the well-founded concerns raised by the LRCA and member municipalities. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your officials to discuss a respectful, regionally appropriate approach to watershed governance moving forward.

Thank you for your attention and for your ongoing engagement with Northern Ontario communities.

Sincerely,

Rick Dumas
President
Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA)

cc: NOMA Board of Directors
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority
Northwestern Ontario Municipal Councils
Hon. Kevin Holland, MPP Thunder Bay – Atikokan
Lise Vaugoius, MPP Thunder Bay – Superior North
Sol Mamakwa – MPP Kiiwetinoong

December 5, 2025

VIA EMAIL: minister.mecp@ontario.ca

Honourable Todd McCarthy
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
5th Flr, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Re: Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities

Dear Minister McCarthy,

Council of the Municipality of Neebing reviewed your Ministry's proposal related to boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities (ERO Posting 025-1257).

At their meeting on December 3, 2025, Council carried the following resolution:

> WHEREAS the *Conservation Authorities Act* (1946) enables municipalities to establish local conservation authorities, and when municipalities choose to form such authorities, they assume responsibility for governance and funding through the appointment of a Board of Directors and the provision of an annual levy to cover expenses;
>
> AND WHEREAS the municipalities within Lakehead Region established the Neebing Valley Conservation Authority in 1954 which enlarged to the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) in 1963;
>
> AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide approximately 50% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 5%;
>
> AND WHEREAS municipalities have governed their respective conservation authorities for decades, tailoring programs and services to local watershed needs, maintaining accountable service standards, and ensuring fair and predictable costs for ratepayers;
>
> AND WHEREAS conservation authorities collectively own and manage thousands of hectares of land, much of which was donated by local residents as a personal legacy for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good;

AND WHEREAS proposed governance changes risk undermining community trust and donor confidence, as these contributions were made with the expectation of local accountability and decision-making in the care and management of these lands;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes creating the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA), a Crown corporation that would assume governance responsibilities and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities; however, municipal cost apportionment, the overall cost of establishing and operating the OPCA, and the anticipated cost of consolidation remain undisclosed, creating significant uncertainty for municipalities and ratepayers, even as local watershed advisory boards would still be needed for oversight;

AND WHEREAS the Province already possesses the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations, and standards through the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks;

AND WHEREAS such consolidation risks the loss of local viewpoints and representation, reducing the ability of communities to influence decisions that directly affect their watersheds, conservation lands, and municipal levies;

AND WHEREAS the Lakehead Region is located over 1,300 kilometers away from the other conservation authorities, making the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration geographically impractical and disconnected from local watershed realities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Municipality of Neebing calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands;

AND THAT the Council of the Municipality of Neebing requests that the Province provide full transparency regarding the projected costs of establishing the OPCA and consolidating conservation authorities, including the impact on municipal levies and ratepayers, before implementing any governance changes;

AND FURTHER THAT the Council of the Municipality of Neebing supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, but imposing a new top-down agency structure without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs;

AND FURTHER THAT the Council of the Municipality of Neebing supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity, and program delivery across the province, and requests that the Province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to determine the most effective level of strategic consolidation to achieve both provincial and local objectives;

AND FURTHER THAT Council of the Municipality of Neebing is opposed to the proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND FURTHER THAT the Council of the Municipality of Neebing recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the “Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority”;

AND FURTHER THAT the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics; MPP Kevin Holland; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; Conservation Ontario; all local municipalities; and all conservation authorities in Ontario.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Erika Kromm
Clerk Treasurer
(Resolution No. 2025-12-281)

cc: Public Input Coordinator, MECP Conservation and Source Protection Branch
Peter Tabuns, Opposition Critic, tabunsp-qp@ndp.on.ca
MPP Kevin Holland, kevin.holland@pc.ola.org
Association of Municipalities of Ontario, resolutions@amo.on.ca
Conservation Ontario, info@conservationontario.ca
All Conservation Authorities
All Local Municipalities

Conmee
TOWNSHIP
79 Holland Rd W, RR #1
Kakabeka Falls, ON P0T 1W0
www.conmee.com

COUNCIL RESOLUTION:
Township of Conmee
Resolution No.: 2025-~~000~~ 234
Date: December 8, 2025

Moved By: Councillor Grant Arnold
Seconded By: Councillor David Halvorsen

WHEREAS the *Conservation Authorities Act* (1946) enables municipalities to establish local conservation authorities, and when municipalities choose to form such authorities, they assume responsibility for governance and funding through the appointment of a Board of Directors and the provision of an annual levy to cover expenses;

AND WHEREAS the municipalities within Lakehead Region established the Neebing Valley Conservation Authority in 1954 which enlarged to the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) in 1963;

AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide approximately 50% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 5%;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have governed their respective conservation authorities for decades, tailoring programs and services to local watershed needs, maintaining accountable service standards, and ensuring fair and predictable costs for ratepayers;

AND WHEREAS conservation authorities collectively own and manage thousands of hectares of land, much of which was donated by local residents and entrusted to conservation authorities as a personal legacy for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good, with the expectation that such lands would be cared for by locally governed conservation authorities;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, a Crown corporation that would assume governance responsibilities and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities, with municipal cost apportionment yet to be defined;

AND WHEREAS the Province already possesses the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations, and standards through the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Township of Conmee calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed,

watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands;
AND THAT while the Township of Conmee supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down agency structure without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs;

AND THAT the Township of Conmee supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity, and program delivery across the province, and requests that the Province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to determine the most effective level of strategic consolidation to achieve both provincial and local objectives;

AND THAT the Township of Conmee is opposed to the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND THAT the Township of Conmee recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the "Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority";

AND THAT the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to:

- the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics;
- local Members of Provincial Parliament;
- local Members of Parliament;
- the Association of Municipalities of Ontario;
- Conservation Ontario;
- All local municipalities; and
- All Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

Carried ☑ Defeated ☐ Amended ☐ Deferred ☐

Signed this 8th day of December, 2025

Mayor: Sheila Maxwell Sheila Maxwell

Clerk: Karen Paisley Karen Paisley

CORPORATE REPORT

DEPARTMENT:	Planning	***REPORT NO.***	2025.234
DATE PREPARED:	December 2, 2025	***MEETING DATE:***	December 9, 2025
SUBJECT:	Comments on Provincial Conservation Authority Consolidation	***NO. OF PAGES:***	7 incl. attachment

RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report 2025.234 authorization of administration to submit the comments on ERO No. 025-1257, *Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities* presented in the Report, BE APPROVED

PURPOSE

To provide Council with information on ERO No. 025-1257 and comments for submission on the ERO posting.

BACKGROUND

On November 7, 2025, the Ontario Government tabled ERO No. 025-1257, Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities.

On October 31, 2025, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation which, if passed, would amend the *Conservation Authorities Act* to create the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency – a provincial board-governed agency – to provide centralized leadership, efficient governance, strategic direction, and oversight of Ontario's conservation authorities.

Another key action announced by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and the Chief Conservation Executive is the plan to consolidate the province's 36 conservation authorities into regional conservation authorities that continue to align with watershed boundaries.

Key concerns around the proposed consolidation include:

- **Loss of local representation and knowledge:**
  - Consolidating local authorities into larger regional bodies removes the ability for municipalities to have a voice and makes it harder for regional authorities to understand local needs and conditions.
  - There is a fear that the new, larger regional authorities will be less responsive and accountable to local communities.

- **Negative impact on services:**
  - The consolidation could create confusion and a loss of efficient, coordinated services that are already in place, especially during a time of escalating climate-driven natural hazards.
  - The transition itself is expected to cause delays and divert resources from essential front-line work, affecting everything from permitting to flood and drinking water protection.
- **Financial and administrative burdens:**
  - Argument that the consolidation will create substantial transition costs that outweigh the projected benefits.
  - Many conservation authorities are primarily funded by municipalities, not the province, and the new structure doesn't reflect this local funding and reliance.
- **Misaligned regional boundaries:**
  - Some authorities, particularly in Northern Ontario, argue that the proposed regional boundaries are illogical and do not connect the conservation authorities based on watershed or municipal links.
- **Risk to unique services:**
  - Concerns have been raised about the potential loss of unique services like bilingual support and the stewardship of lands donated to specific conservation authorities.

REPORT SUMMARY

Attached is a 4-page communication administration received on Nov. 27th from the LRCA regarding Ontario's proposal.

Administration is proposing the submission of the following comments, which incorporate information supplied in the LRCA's communication:

> *The Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands.*
>
> *While the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down agency structure without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs.*
>
> *The Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity, and program delivery across the province, and requests that the Province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to determine the most effective level of strategic consolidation to achieve both provincial and local objectives.*

The Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge is opposed to the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

The Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the "Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority" and that the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments.

PREPARED BY: Kerri Reid, Manager of Planning

REVIEWED BY: Wayne Hanchard

Wayne Hanchard, CAO/Clerk

LAKEHEAD REGION
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

130 Conservation Road, PO Box 10427
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6T8
Phone: (807) 344-5857 | Fax: (807) 345-9156

November 27, 2025

Re: Proposed Regional Consolidation of Conservation Authorities, ERO Notice #025-1257
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Resolution #130/25

With the passing of Bill 68 on November 25, 2025, the Province of Ontario has established a new oversight body called the "Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency" (OPCA) to oversee Conservation Authorities (CAs) and the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for CAs in Ontario.

At the November 26, 2025 Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) Board Meeting, the LRCA Board of Directors passed a resolution opposing the Province's proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration as outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257, which proposes to consolidate the LRCA into a region 1,500 kilometres from the Lakehead Watershed with 72 other southern Ontario municipalities. The resolution also recommends that the LRCA form a stand alone independent Regional Conservation Authority, as the "Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority" to ensure that the interests of Northwestern Ontario are equitably represented. Additionally, the Board is also requesting that the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the LRCA before finalizing any consolidation boundaries.

The Board of Directors acknowledges the Province's goals in amalgamating conservation authorities; however, strongly believes that the LRCA is unique both in location and the region that it serves and therefore should not be amalgamated with conservation authorities with no watershed or municipal connection.

LRCA Resolution #130/25 has been attached. The LRCA encourages all partners to review the posting https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/025-1257 and submit comments prior to the closing date of December 22, 2025.

For further information, please contact the undersigned at info@lakeheadca.com.

Yours truly,

Donna Blunt

Donna Blunt
Chair

Encl.: LRCA Board Resolution #130/25

c.c.:

Hon.Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Peter Tabuns, MPP. Critic, Environment, Conservation and Parks
Kevin Holland, MPP, Thunder Bay – Atikokan
Lise Vaugoeis, MPP, Thunder Bay- Superior North
Marcus Powlowski, MP – Thunder Bay – Rainy River
Hon. Patty Hajdu – MP Thunder Bay – Superior North
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Conservation Ontario
All local municipalities
All Conservation Authorities in Ontario

LRCA Resolution #130/25

Moved by: Sheelagh Hendrick
Seconded by: Brian Kurikka

With Respect to the posting by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Environmental Registry Notice No. 025-1257 ("Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities"), proposing to reduce Ontario's 36 conservation authorities to 7 regional entities 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 THAT** under this proposal, the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) would be merged into a new "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" together with:*

- *Grey Sauble Conservation*
- *the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority*
- *the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority*
- *the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority*
- *the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority*
- *the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority*

forming a single organization encompassing the eastern shores of Lake Huron, the southern shores of Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe, and the western shores of Lake Superior in Northwestern Ontario;

***AND THAT** the LRCA Board acknowledges and supports the Province's goals of improved efficiency, consistency and fiscal prudence in conservation delivery,*

***AND THAT** the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is a self-sufficient entity that is; accountable to its member municipalities;*

- *financially resilient;*
- *consistently processes permits in less than 7 days;*
- *operates in the City of Thunder Bay that has exceeded their housing target by 143%;*
- *has modern financial and IT processes that prioritize security and redundancy; and*
- *is a locally recognized leader in the conservation and protection of the Lakehead Watershed; and*
- *all staff are front line workers,*

***AND THAT** the Board further recognizes that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is unique as it does not abut any other Conservation Authority and solely serves Northwestern Ontario communities that face vastly different climatic, hydrological, geographic and infrastructure realities, and would be disconnected to the proposed larger overarching*

administrative structure that is physically based 1,500 kilometres from the north with 72 other municipalities;

The Board finds that the proposed "Huron-Superior Region" configuration would :

- *Create a geographically vast and administratively complex entity, joining Northwestern Ontario with fast-growing Southern Ontario municipalities that are 1,300-1,500 kilometres apart with no shared watershed connection or economic alignment;*
- *dilute local accountability and municipal partnership, contrary to the principle that decisions are best made at the local level;*
- *generate substantial transition costs — including human-resources integration, governance restructuring, IT migration and policy harmonization, rebranding — that would divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay measurable outcomes, contrary to the Province's business-planning principles of value for money, cost containment and service continuity; and*
- *risk greater uncertainty and delay for builders, developers and farmers, as local permitting offices and staff familiar with local conditions are replaced by distant regional structures, making it harder for applicants to obtain timely local advice, resolve issues or expedite housing and infrastructure approvals that support the Province's "Get It Done" agenda;*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Board of Directors is opposed to the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

***AND THAT** the Board recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the 8th Regional Conservation Authority as the "Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority";*

***AND THAT** further provincial evaluation is conducted with a more focused specific model as a geographically coherent, cost-effective and locally accountable alternative that advances the government's priorities of efficiency, red-tape reduction and timely housing delivery;*

***AND THAT** the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;*

***AND THAT** this resolution, with a letter from the Chair, be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to:*

- *the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics;*
- *local Members of Provincial Parliament;*
- *local Members of Parliament;*
- *the Association of Municipalities of Ontario;*
- *Conservation Ontario;*
- *All local municipalities; and*
- *All Conservation Authorities in Ontario.*

Carried

Resolution

Resolution No.	Agenda Item	Date
457-2025	6. (f)	Dec 9-2025

MOVED BY Councillor

SECONDED BY Councillor

THAT with respect to Report 2025.234 authorization of administration to submit the comments on ERO No. 025-1257, Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities presented in the Report, BE APPROVED

☑ **Carried** ☐ **Defeated** ☐ **Amended** ☐ **Deferred**

Signature

RECORDED VOTE			
Council		**For**	**Against**
Councillors	D. Calvert		
	B. Kamphof		
	D. Peacock		
	A. Vis		
Mayor	L. Kloosterhuis		