



CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF SOUTH HURON

322 Main Street South P.O. Box 759

Exeter Ontario

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www.southhuron.ca

December 18, 2025

Via email: todd.mccarthy@pc.ola.org

Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks
5th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Hon. Todd McCarthy,

Re: Response to Bill 68- Proposed New Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency

Please be advised that South Huron Council passed the following resolution at their December 15, 2025, Regular Council Meeting:

516-2025

Moved By: Ted Oke

Seconded by: Aaron Neeb

That South Huron Council endorses the Upper Thames Conservation Authority's draft Municipal Resolution regarding response to Bill 68 - Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities; and

That the draft resolution be updated to name the Municipality of South Huron, and circulated to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, MPP Thompson, AMO, ROMA, area indigenous communities, all municipalities in Ontario, Conservation Ontario and all Conservation Authorities in Ontario as follows:

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 Municipality of South Huron established the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (initially formed in 1947) and Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (initially formed in 1946); and

Whereas local municipalities currently provide approximately 35% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 2% (2026 budget); 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 acres of land. Many of these properties were entrusted to the UTRCA 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 Council of the Municipality of South Huron 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

Further That while the Municipality of South Huron 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



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Further That the Municipality of South Huron 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 a copy of this resolution be sent to:

- the Ontario Minister of Environment, Conservation, and Parks,
- local MPPs,
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario,
- Rural Ontario Municipal Association,
- area Indigenous communities,
- all municipalities,
- Conservation Authorities, and
- Conservation Ontario.

Result: Carried

Respectfully,

Kendra Webster, Legislative & Licensing Coordinator

Municipality of South Huron

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Encl.

cc: MPP, Hon. Lisa Thompson, lisa.thompson@pc.ola.org; AMO, resolutions@amo.on.ca; ROMA, roma@roma.on.ca; area indigenous communities; all municipalities in Ontario; Conservation Ontario, info@conservationontario.ca; all Conservation Authorities in Ontario