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Town of Saugeen Shores
600 Tomlinson Drive, P.O. Box
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Port Elgin, ON N0H 2C0

January 14, 2026

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queens Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Re: Motion Regarding the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority

At the January 5, 2026, Regular Council meeting for the Town of Saugeen Shores, the following motion was passed:

Resolution 010-2026

Moved by: Councillor D. Myette

Seconded by: Councillor R. Stack

Whereas the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority “The Authority” was established in 1950, 75 years ago by a group of municipalities, as a response to problems associated with flooding; and

Whereas the Town of Saugeen Shores is the single largest member by apportionment in this collection of 8 member municipalities, comprising of the main channel and mouth of the Saugeen River at Southampton. The Town of Saugeen Shores is the largest contributor of annual levies that cover the operation of the Authority; and

Whereas the member municipalities cover 44% of the operational costs of the SVCA, 7% coming from the Provincial funding and the remaining is generated through internally generated revenue and permitting fees; and

Whereas the fees charged by Conservation Authorities have been frozen for 3 years which has had the effect of shifting the financial burden onto levies and by extension the property tax payers; and

Whereas the Provincial Conservation Authorities Association (Conservation Ontario) has and continues to provide the respective Authorities with guidance, oversight, and consistency of regulation application; and

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Whereas the development of the “Agency” is proposed to be funded by municipalities and serves only to add another layer of Government bureaucracy, which by definition will serve only to increase financial burden on member Municipalities; and

Whereas one of the stated objectives of the “Agency” is development of a single digital permitting platform. This approach will serve to alienate a significant portion of our residents who do not have access to internet services, due to rural location or due to religious beliefs; and

Whereas the SVCA is located in a primarily rural geographic region, that due to the proposed consolidation of 7 Authorities will be seemingly overshadowed by much larger and more densely populated authorities with much larger urban components; and

Whereas the SVCA has worked hard to achieve a streamlined and efficient operation and service delivery model, due in large part to the direct oversight by a Board comprised of member municipalities appointed elected officials; and

Whereas the proposed consolidated Huron-Superior Authority would be comprised of up to 80 municipalities, 23,000 sq/km and by extension, a Board of Directors that would be so large as to be unmanageable, and would surely result in smaller rural municipalities losing direct control over the operation of the Authority; and

Whereas the inclusion of Lakehead Region CA in North West Ontario, could have detrimental repercussions arising from travel distance and geographic differences alone; and

Whereas the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority owns and manages thousands of acres of CA land, many of which are income generating, through user fees, land leases, managed forest harvest, and campground fees. The Amalgamation plan does not address how these assets, which by extension belong to member Municipalities, would be equitably divested. Many of these properties were granted to the Authority, specifically detailing the nature and terms of ownership which legally must be maintained going forward; and

Whereas Authorities across the province have liquid assets in the form of trusts, and reserves that belong to member municipalities which run the risk of being swallowed up by large Authorities with larger budgets and resources.

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Now Therefore, be it Resolved that the Town of Saugeen Shores requests that the Amalgamation into the “Huron Superior Regional Conservation Authority” as outlined in ERO 025-1257 be reconsidered. This in order to maintain the local oversight and protect against as yet unforeseen consequences which will serve to undermine the SVCA’s ability to provide regional knowledge-based service delivery and management of properties under our stewardship and ownership; and

Further ensure that should the amalgamations go forward that consideration be given to grouping Rural Authorities with similar watershed characteristics together, while grouping more Urban Authorities together for similar reasons; and

Further ensure that any transitional costs are fully funded by the Province and not borne by member Municipalities, and that Municipalities are provided with clear funding models in 2026 so as to allow for sufficient planning data for the 2027 budgets; and

Further that Saugeen Shores Council urges the Province to engage with affected municipalities and First Nations communities in a meaningful way to collaboratively review the service delivery model and standardize only where necessary paying attention to the different needs of Rural and Urban Authorities. That the Province use this approach rather than develop another level of administration and the associated financial burden that would surely result; and

Finally that this resolution be included in the Municipalities ERO response and be forwarded to the:

- Premier of Ontario;
- Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks;
- Bruce County Council;
- All of Ontario’s Municipalities;
- Huron Bruce MPP/ Minister of Rural Affairs;
- The board of Rural Ontario Municipal Association;
- AMO; and,
- Conservation Ontario.

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Sincerely,

Ashlynn Kennedy
Licensing and Records Clerk

cc: Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks;
Bruce County Council;
All Ontario Municipalities;
Huron Bruce MPP/ Minister of Rural Affairs;
The board of Rural Ontario Municipal Association;
AMO; and,
Conservation Ontario.

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