



Proposed New Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency

Resolution No. 90/25

Moved by Angelo Marignani

Seconded by Ryan McNamara

WHEREAS the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks has posted 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

WHEREAS under this proposal, the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) would be merged into a new "Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority" together with the:

- Lower Thames Valley CA
- St. Clair Region CA
- Upper Thames River CA
- Kettle Creek CA
- Catfish Creek CA
- Long Point Region CA
- Grand River CA

forming a single organization stretching from Windsor, Essex County and Pelee Island, through north of Waterloo region; and

WHEREAS the Board acknowledges and supports the Province's goals of improved efficiency, consistency and fiscal prudence in conservation delivery, but finds that the proposed "Lake Erie Region" configuration would:

1. Create a geographically vast and administratively complex entity, joining northern, rural and fast-growing southern municipalities throughout the province with little shared watershed connection or economic alignment;
2. Dilute local accountability and municipal partnership, contrary to the principle that decisions are best made closest to the communities they affect;

3. Generate substantial transition costs — including human-resources integration, governance restructuring, IT migration and policy harmonization — that would divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay measurable outcomes, contrary to the Province's own business-planning principles of value for money, cost containment and service continuity; and,
4. Risk greater uncertainty and delay for builders, developers and farmers, as local permitting offices and staff familiar with site 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; and

WHEREAS the ERCA has already undertaken significant modernization work aligned with provincial objectives, including:

- implementation of a digital permitting and inspection system that has reduced turnaround times;
- improvements in transparency and client communication;
- data and network systems, including security and redundancy
- numerous internal reviews to identify opportunities for cost savings and efficiencies
- conversion of redundant support and non-mandatory positions to front-line mandatory service positions

demonstrating that meaningful modernization can occur within the current watershed-based governance framework; and

WHEREAS the Board further recognizes that the Essex Region Conservation Authority serves Southwestern Ontario communities facing vastly different climatic, hydrological and infrastructure realities, with no single river running through the Essex region by itself defining the watershed and being surrounded on three sides by water, with topography that is prairie-like and subject to costal erosion and flood-prone areas, which would be ill-served by a larger overarching administrative structure extending over 300 kilometers to townships north of the Kitchener-Waterloo Guelph area;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Board of Directors does not support the proposed "Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257; and
2. The Board instead endorses further provincial evaluation of 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
3. The Board requests that the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities and conservation authorities across Southwestern Ontario most specifically, the Windsor-Essex and Pelee Island municipalities before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments; and
4. 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 Municipal Councils
- the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Conservation Ontario;
- local First Nations
- local environmental groups and other stakeholders, and
- all Conservation Authorities in Ontario

- **CARRIED**

I, Nicole Kupnicki, Manager, Human Resources & Council Services of the Essex Region Conservation Authority, do hereby certify this to be a true and complete copy of Resolution No. 90/25, passed by the Essex Region Conservation Authority Meeting of the Board of Directors on the 13th day of November, 2025.

DATED at Essex, Ontario
this 14th day of November, 2025.



Nicole Kupnicki