

Media Release - For Immediate Release
November 19, 2020

Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Asks for Full Repeal - Public Safety & Watershed Science at Risk
Province of Ontario Proposes Amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act & Planning Act



LTVCA – On November 5, 2020, the Province of Ontario introduced Bill 229, Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act - Schedule 6 – Conservation Authorities (CA) Act through Budget Measures. This Bill proposes amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act and Planning Act that will diminish Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority's (LTVCA) ability to serve its municipal partners and other watershed stakeholders, putting public safety and watershed science at risk. The LTVCA is asking the Government of Ontario to remove these proposed amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act and Planning Act in Bill 229 Schedule 6.

"These proposed amendments will certainly diminish our ability to protect our watershed residents from natural hazards and conserve natural resources" states LTVCA Board Chair Linda McKinlay, and furthermore "Our Board of Directors is requesting that the Province remove these proposed amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act and Planning Act found in Schedule 6 of Bill 229."

The Province is suggesting that amending the CA Act is to improve transparency and consistency in conservation authority operations, strengthen municipal and provincial oversight, and streamline Conservation Authority roles in permitting and land use planning. There is no obligation for the government to consult on the proposed amendments because this proposal was brought forward under a budget measures bill. Conservation Authorities support the goals of the Province but the proposed amendments to the CA Act will achieve the opposite of these goals.

Four key concerns have been highlighted by the LTVCA supporting their request for repeal of Bill 229 Schedule 6. Firstly, the proposed changes to the CA Act that removes oversight and control of Conservation Authorities from local municipalities giving it to the Minister is less transparent, less responsible to local citizens, and removes consistency. Secondly, proposed changes do not streamline but increase Red Tape in permitting and will slow and encumber the Section 28 permitting process. Proposed changes to the CA Act and the Planning Act will endanger the protection of local watersheds and the environment, and finally, proposed changes will not support and improve the continued protection of local residents from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion.

The CA Act has been under review by the Province since April 2019. Conservation Authorities support this review and updating the Act to provide better service to our communities and improve our watersheds.

Now more than ever we rely on a healthy environment for our own well-being. It's important the LTVCA is able to continue to protect our local lower Thames River watershed to ensure the safety of its residents. Please contact your local MPP and voice your concerns over Bill 229 and request that it be repealed.

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