

Hello Mayor Schaefer,

I am writing you on behalf of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) Board of Directors. I would like to bring to your attention the impact of the decision by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry of Ontario, Graydon Smith, to freeze the fees conservation authorities can charge in regard to planning, development, and permitting fees, and ask for your support in requesting that the decision be reversed and the freeze lifted.

The Minister issued a Ministers Direction (attached) on December 28, 2022. As stated by the Minister in the direction, "The purpose of this Direction, which is effective from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, is to require a conservation authority not to change the amount of the fee it charges or the manner in which it determines the fee for any program or service that may be provided by the conservation authority. This relates to reviewing and commenting on planning and development related proposals or land use planning policies, or for permits issued by conservation authorities."

The Minister issued a second Direction (attached) on December 13, 2023, extending the freeze on fees to December 31, 2024. This Direction was further confirmed in a letter from the Ministry (attached) dated February 16, 2024.

The Direction justified the freeze as a way to assist in reaching the goal of Bill 23 (1.5 million homes in 10 years). It stated that, "A number of these changes affect conservation authorities and are intended to support faster and less costly approvals, streamline conservation authority processes, and help make land suitable for housing available for development."

Freezing the development and application fees has the greatest impact on conservation authorities located in high-growth areas of the province, which includes the UTRCA. Since 2021, provincial population reports reflect that municipalities within the Upper Thames watershed are the fastest growing in Ontario. Corresponding to this population growth, the UTRCA has seen a very large increase in the number of planning, development, and permit applications being submitted.

At the same time, the UTRCA is also responding to reduced timelines to review and comment on applications since the changes of Bill 108 and 109 came into effect. Staff have heard from member municipalities about the need for the UTRCA to increase its level of service to respond to these changes, so that the municipalities are also able to meet the timelines imposed on them by the legislation.

Increases in development pressure to accommodate the watershed's population growth, coupled with reduced timelines, have resulted in the UTRCA having to increase staffing

to meet service delivery timelines. This has led to higher costs which, due to the fee freeze, can only be addressed by levying member municipalities for the extra costs.

The UTRCA is trying to limit the impact to member municipalities by proactively looking for efficiencies through streamlining the processes used by staff and implementing technology. These measures will not, however, address the current situation regarding who is being asked to fund this service.

Growth should pay for growth. Under the current freeze, the Authority's ability to assign the cost of growth to those who are benefiting has been removed. This has led to all the residents of the member municipalities having to pay more through increased tax rates.

I ask you to join in signing the attached letter to the Minister asking for a reversal of the Direction to freeze the fees for planning, development, and permitting. Lifting the freeze on fees will enable the UTRCA to limit the levy asks to member municipalities by recovering more of the costs associated with planning, development, and permitting, from those that are using the service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BP', is positioned above the typed name.

Brian Petrie, Chair

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors

Attachment

**Ministry of Natural
Resources and Forestry**

Office of the Minister

99 Wellesley Street West
Room 6630, Whitney Block
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3
Tel.: 416-314-2301

**Ministère des Richesses
naturelles et des Forêts**

Bureau du ministre

99, rue Wellesley Ouest
Bureau 6630, Édifice Whitney
Toronto ON M7A 1W3
Tél.: 416 314-2301



December 28, 2022

TO: Conservation authorities as listed in the Attachment A “Minister’s Direction to Not Change Fees”

SUBJECT: Minister’s direction for conservation authorities regarding fee changes associated with planning, development and permitting fees

In support of Ontario’s Housing Supply Action Plan: 2022-2023, the province made a series of legislative changes through the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* (Bill 23) to help achieve the goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. These changes accelerate housing development approvals while continuing to protect Ontario families, communities, and critical resources. A number of these changes affect conservation authorities and are intended to support faster and less costly approvals, streamline conservation authority processes, and help make land suitable for housing available for development.

To this end, pursuant to subsection 21.3 (1) of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, which is in effect January 1, 2023, I am issuing a Minister’s Direction (“Direction”), attached to this letter as Attachment “A”. Subsection 21.3 (1) provides that the “Minister may give a written direction to an authority directing it not to change the amount of any fee it charges under subsection 21.2 (10), in respect of a program or service set out in the list referred to in subsection 21.2 (2), for the period specified in the direction.”

The purpose of this Direction, which is effective from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023, is to require a conservation authority not to change the amount of the fee it charges or the manner in which it determines the fee for any program or service that may be provided by the conservation authority. This relates to reviewing and commenting on planning and development related proposals or land use planning policies, or for permits issued by conservation authorities. For greater certainty, the “Prescribed Acts – subsections 21.1.1 (1.1) and 21.1.2 (1.1) of the Act” regulation (O. Reg. 596/22), effective January 1, 2023, prohibits a CA from providing a municipal (Category 2) or other (Category 3) program or service related to reviewing and commenting on a proposal, application, or other matter

made under prescribed Acts. This regulation therefore precludes the charging of a fee by a conservation authority for these specific programs or services provided under subsections 21.1.1 (1) or 21.1.2 (1.1) of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

The conservation authorities listed in Appendix A of the Direction are encouraged to make the Direction publicly available on the Governance section of their websites.

Pursuant to subsection 21.2 (3) of the Act, I am also re-distributing the Minister's list of classes and programs and services in respect of which conservation authorities may charge a fee along with this Direction, with editorial changes to reflect the recent legislative and regulatory changes.

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Keyes, Director, Resources Planning and Development Policy Branch, at Jennifer.Keyes@ontario.ca or 705-761-4831.

If it is in the public interest to do so, I will provide further direction or clarification at a later date related to the matters set out in this Direction.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Graydon Smith
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

c: The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Honourable David Piccini, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

**Minister’s Direction Issued Pursuant to Section 21.3 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*
(this “Direction”)**

WHEREAS section 21.2 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, in effect on January 1, 2023, permits a Conservation Authority to charge a fee for a program or service if the program or service is included in the Minister’s list of classes of programs and services in respect of which a Conservation Authority may charge a fee;

AND WHEREAS subsections 21.2 (6) and 21.2 (7) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provide that a Conservation Authority shall adopt a written fee policy that includes a fee schedule listing the programs and services that it provides in respect of which it charges a fee, and the amount of the fee charged for each program or service or the manner in which the fee is determined (a “**Fee Schedule**”);

AND WHEREAS subsection 21.2 (10) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provides that a Conservation Authority may make a change to the list of fees set out in the fee schedule or to the amount of any fee or the manner in which a fee is determined, provided the authority shall give notice of the proposed change to the public in a manner it considers appropriate;

AND WHEREAS section 21.3 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provides the Minister with the authority to give a written direction to an authority directing it not to change the amount of any fee it charges under subsection 21.2 (10), in respect of a program or service set out in the list referred to in subsection 21.2 (2), for the period specified in the direction;

NOW THEREFORE pursuant to the authority of the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry under section 21.3, the Conservation Authorities set out under Appendix “A” of this Direction (the “**Conservation Authorities**” or each, a “**Conservation Authority**”) are hereby directed as follows:

Fee Changes Prohibition

1. Commencing on the Effective Date and for the duration of the Term of this Direction, a Conservation Authority is prohibited from making a change under subsection 21.2 (10) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* to the amount of any fee or the manner in which a fee is determined in its fee schedule if such a change would have the effect of changing the fee amount for the programs and services described in paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Direction.

Program and Service Fees Impacted

2. This Direction applies to any fee set out in the Fee Schedule of a Conservation Authority, including without limitation fees for any mandatory program or service (Category 1), municipal program or service (Category 2), or Conservation Authority recommended program or service (Category 3) related to reviewing and commenting on

planning and development related proposals, applications, or land use planning policies, or for Conservation Authority permitting.

3. For greater certainty, this Direction applies to any fees in respect of the following programs or services provided under the Mandatory Programs and Services regulation ([O. Reg. 686/21](#)):
 - a. Section 6: programs and services related to reviewing applications and proposals under the *Aggregate Resources Act*, *Drainage Act*, *Environmental Assessment Act*, and the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*, for the purpose of commenting on the risks related to natural hazards arising from the proposal,
 - b. Section 7: programs and services related to ensuring that decisions under the *Planning Act* are consistent with the natural hazards policies in the policy statements issued under section 3 of the *Planning Act* and are in conformance with any natural hazard policies included in a provincial plan as defined in section 1 of that Act,
 - c. Section 8: programs and services related to Conservation Authority duties, functions, and responsibilities to administer and enforce section 28 and its regulations, section 28.0.1, and section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*,
 - d. Paragraph 4 of subsection 13 (3): programs and services related to reviewing and commenting on any proposal made under another Act for the purpose of determining whether the proposal relates to a significant drinking water threat or may impact any drinking water sources protected by a source protection plan, and
 - e. Subparagraph 4 iv of section 15: programs and services related to reviewing and commenting on proposals made under other Acts for the purpose of determining the proposal's impact on the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan and the Lake Simcoe watershed.

Application

4. This Direction, applies to all Conservation Authorities in Ontario, listed in Appendix "A" to this Direction.
5. For greater certainty, this Direction also applies to the Conservation Authorities listed in Appendix "A" to this Direction when such Conservation Authorities are meeting as a source protection authority under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

Effective Date and Term

6. This Direction is effective from January 1, 2023 (the "**Effective Date**").
7. The term of this Direction is the period from the Effective Date to December 31, 2023 (the "**Term**").

Amendments

8. This Direction may be amended in writing from time to time at the sole discretion of the Minister.

**HIS MAJESTY THE KING IN RIGHT OF ONTARIO
as represented by the
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry**



The Honourable Graydon Smith
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
December 28, 2022

APPENDIX A

LIST OF CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES TO WHICH THE DIRECTION APPLIES

Ausable Bayfield CA

R.R. #3
71108 Morrison Line
Exeter ON N0M 1S5
Brian Horner
bhorner@abca.on.ca

Cataraqui Region CA

Box 160
1641 Perth Road
Glenburnie ON K0H 1S0
Katrina Furlanetto
kfurlanetto@crca.ca

Catfish Creek CA

R.R. #5
8079 Springwater Road
Aylmer ON N5H 2R4
Dusty Underhill
generalmanager@catfishcreek.ca

Central Lake Ontario CA

100 Whiting Avenue
Oshawa ON L1H 3T3
Chris Darling
cdarling@cloca.com

Credit Valley CA

1255 Old Derry Rd
Mississauga ON L5N 6R4
Quentin Hanchard
quentin.hancard@cvc.ca

Crowe Valley CA

Box 416
70 Hughes Lane
Marmora ON K0K 2M0
Tim Pidduck
tim.pidduck@crowevalley.com

Essex Region CA

Suite 311
360 Fairview Ave West
Essex ON N8M 1Y6

Tim Byrne
tbyrne@erca.org

Ganaraska Region CA

Box 328
2216 County Road 28
Port Hope ON L1A 3V8
Linda Laliberte
llaliberte@grca.on.ca

Grand River CA

Box 729
400 Clyde Road
Cambridge ON N1R 5W6
Samantha Lawson
slawson@grandriver.ca

Grey Sauble CA

R.R. #4
237897 Inglis Falls Road
Owen Sound ON N4K 5N6
Tim Lanthier
t.lanthier@greysauble.on.ca

Halton Region CA

2596 Britannia Road West
Burlington ON L7P 0G3
Hassaan Basit
hbasit@hrca.on.ca

Hamilton Region CA

P.O. Box 81067
838 Mineral Springs Road
Ancaster ON L9G 4X1
Lisa Burnside
lisa.burnside@conservationhamilton.ca

Kawartha Region CA

277 Kenrei (Park) Road
Lindsay ON K9V 4R1
Mark Majchrowski
mmajchrowski@kawarthaconservation.com

Kettle Creek CA

R.R. #8
44015 Ferguson Line
St. Thomas ON N5P 3T3
Elizabeth VanHooren
elizabeth@kettlecreekconservation.on.ca

Lake Simcoe Region CA

Box 282
120 Bayview Parkway
Newmarket ON L3Y 3W3
Rob Baldwin
r.baldwin@lsrca.on.ca

Lakehead Region CA

Box 10427
130 Conservation Road
Thunder Bay ON P7B 6T8
Tammy Cook
tammy@lakeheadca.com

Long Point Region CA

4 Elm Street
Tillsonburg ON N4G 0C4
Judy Maxwell
jmaxwell@lprca.on.ca

Lower Thames Valley CA

100 Thames Street
Chatham ON N7L 2Y8
Mark Peacock
mark.peacock@ltvca.ca

Lower Trent Region CA

R.R. #1
714 Murray Street
Trenton ON K8V 5P4
Rhonda Bateman
rhonda.bateman@ltc.on.ca

Maitland Valley CA

Box 127

1093 Marietta Street
Wroxeter ON N0G 2X0
Phil Beard
pbeard@mvca.on.ca

Mattagami Region CA
100 Lakeshore Road
Timmins ON P4N 8R5
David Vallier
david.vallier@timmins.ca

Mississippi Valley CA
10970 Highway 7
Carleton Place ON K7C 3P1
Sally McIntyre
smcintyre@mvc.on.ca

Niagara Peninsula CA
250 Thorold Road West, 3rd Floor
Welland ON L3C 3W2
Chandra Sharma
csharma@npca.ca

Nickel District CA
199 Larch St
Suite 401
Sudbury ON P3E 5P9
Carl Jorgensen
carl.jorgensen@conservationsudbury.ca

North Bay-Mattawa CA
15 Janey Avenue
North Bay ON P1C 1N1
Chitra Gowda
chitra.gowda@nbmca.ca

Nottawasaga Valley CA
8195 Line 8
Utopia ON L0M 1T0
Doug Hevenor
dhevenor@nvca.on.ca

Otonabee Region CA

250 Milroy Drive
Peterborough ON K9H 7M9
Janette Loveys Smith
jsmith@otonabeeconservation.com

Quinte CA

R.R. #2
2061 Old Highway #2
Belleville ON K8N 4Z2
Brad McNevin
bmcnevin@quinteconservation.ca

Raisin Region CA

PO Box 429
18045 County Road 2
Cornwall ON K6H 5T2
Richard Pilon
richard.pilon@rrca.on.ca

Rideau Valley CA

Box 599
3889 Rideau Valley Dr.
Manotick ON K4M 1A5
Sommer Casgrain-Robertson
sommer.casgrain-robertson@rvca.ca

Saugeen Valley CA

R.R. #1
1078 Bruce Road #12, Box #150
Formosa ON N0G 1W0
Jennifer Stephens
j.stephens@svca.on.ca

Sault Ste. Marie Region CA

1100 Fifth Line East
Sault Ste. Marie ON P6A 6J8
Corrina Barrett
cbarrett@ssmrca.ca

South Nation River CA

38 Victoria Street
P.O. Box 29
Finch ON K0C 1K0
Angela Coleman
acoleman@nation.on.ca

St. Clair Region CA

205 Mill Pond Crescent

Strathroy ON N7G 3P9
Ken Phillips
kphillips@scrca.on.ca

Toronto and Region CA
101 Exchange Avenue
Vaughan ON L4K 5R6
John MacKenzie
john.mackenzie@trca.ca

Upper Thames River CA
1424 Clarke Road
London ON N5V 5B9
Tracey Annett
annettt@thamesriver.on.ca

**Ministry of Natural
Resources and Forestry**

Office of the Minister

99 Wellesley St W
Room 6630, Whitney Block
Toronto ON M7A 1W3
Tel.: 416-314-2301

**Ministère des Richesses
naturelles et des Forêts**

Bureau du ministre

99, rue Wellesley Ouest
Bureau 6630, Édifice Whitney
Toronto ON M7A 1W3
Tél.: 416-314-2301



December 13, 2023

TO: All Conservation Authorities

SUBJECT: Extension of Minister's Direction for Conservation Authorities Regarding Fee Changes Associated with Planning, Development and Permitting Fees

I am writing with regards to conservation authority fees for the 2024 year. As you are aware, a Minister's Direction ("Direction") was issued on December 28, 2022, directing conservation authorities not to change fees for programs and services associated with planning, development and permitting for the 2023 calendar year. I have provided a copy of this previous direction for your reference.

Pursuant to my authority under subsection 21.3 (1) of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, I am issuing a new Direction that extends the previous Direction for the upcoming year (attached to this letter as Attachment A). The Direction will be in effect from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 and applies to fees for the same programs and services specified in the Direction that was in effect for 2023.

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Keyes, Director, Resources Planning and Development Policy Branch, at 705-761-4831 or jennifer.keyes@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Graydon Smith".

The Honourable Graydon Smith
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

c: The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Honourable Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

**Minister’s Direction Issued Pursuant to Section 21.3 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*
(this “Direction”)**

WHEREAS section 21.2 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* permits a Conservation Authority to charge a fee for a program or service if the program or service is included in the Minister’s list of classes of programs and services in respect of which a Conservation Authority may charge a fee;

AND WHEREAS subsections 21.2 (6) and 21.2 (7) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provide that a Conservation Authority shall adopt a written fee policy that includes a fee schedule listing the programs and services that it provides in respect of which it charges a fee, and the amount of the fee charged for each program or service or the manner in which the fee is determined (a “**Fee Schedule**”);

AND WHEREAS subsection 21.2 (10) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provides that a Conservation Authority may make a change to the list of fees set out in the fee schedule or to the amount of any fee or the manner in which a fee is determined, provided the authority shall give notice of the proposed change to the public in a manner it considers appropriate;

AND WHEREAS section 21.3 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provides the Minister with the authority to give a written direction to an authority directing it not to change the amount of any fee it charges under subsection 21.2 (10), in respect of a program or service set out in the list referred to in subsection 21.2 (2), for the period specified in the direction;

NOW THEREFORE pursuant to the authority of the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry under section 21.3, the Conservation Authorities set out under Appendix “A” of this Direction (the “**Conservation Authorities**” or each, a “**Conservation Authority**”) are hereby directed as follows:

Fee Changes Prohibition

1. Commencing on the Effective Date and for the duration of the Term of this Direction, a Conservation Authority is prohibited from making a change under subsection 21.2 (10) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* to the amount of any fee or the manner in which a fee is determined in its fee schedule if such a change would have the effect of changing the fee amount for the programs and services described in paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Direction.

Program and Service Fees Impacted

2. This Direction applies to any fee set out in the Fee Schedule of a Conservation Authority, including without limitation fees for any mandatory program or service

(Category 1), municipal program or service (Category 2), or Conservation Authority recommended program or service (Category 3) related to reviewing and commenting on planning and development related proposals, applications, or land use planning policies, or for Conservation Authority permitting.

3. For greater certainty, this Direction applies to any fees in respect of the following programs or services provided under the Mandatory Programs and Services regulation ([O. Reg. 686/21](#)):
 - a. Section 6: programs and services related to reviewing applications and proposals under the *Aggregate Resources Act*, *Drainage Act*, *Environmental Assessment Act*, and the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*, for the purpose of commenting on the risks related to natural hazards arising from the proposal,
 - b. Section 7: programs and services related to ensuring that decisions under the *Planning Act* are consistent with the natural hazards policies in the policy statements issued under section 3 of the *Planning Act* and are in conformance with any natural hazard policies included in a provincial plan as defined in section 1 of that Act,
 - c. Section 8: programs and services related to Conservation Authority duties, functions, and responsibilities to administer and enforce section 28 and its regulations, section 28.0.1, and section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*,
 - d. Paragraph 4 of subsection 13 (3): programs and services related to reviewing and commenting on any proposal made under another Act for the purpose of determining whether the proposal relates to a significant drinking water threat or may impact any drinking water sources protected by a source protection plan, and
 - e. Subparagraph 4 iv of section 15: programs and services related to reviewing and commenting on proposals made under other Acts for the purpose of determining the proposal's impact on the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan and the Lake Simcoe watershed.

Application

4. This Direction, applies to all Conservation Authorities in Ontario, listed in Appendix "A" to this Direction.
5. For greater certainty, this Direction also applies to the Conservation Authorities listed in Appendix "A" to this Direction when such Conservation Authorities are meeting as a source protection authority under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

Effective Date and Term

6. This Direction is effective from January 1, 2024 (the "**Effective Date**").

7. The term of this Direction is the period from the Effective Date to December 31, 2024 (the “**Term**”).

Amendments

8. This Direction may be amended in writing from time to time at the sole discretion of the Minister.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING IN RIGHT OF ONTARIO
as represented by the
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry



The Honourable Graydon Smith
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
December 13, 2023

APPENDIX A

LIST OF CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES TO WHICH THE DIRECTION APPLIES

Ausable Bayfield CA

R.R. #3
71108 Morrison Line
Exeter ON N0M 1S5
Brian Horner
bhorner@abca.on.ca

Cataraqui Region CA

Box 160
1641 Perth Road
Glenburnie ON K0H 1S0
Katrina Furlanetto
kfurlanetto@crca.ca

Catfish Creek CA

R.R. #5
8079 Springwater Road
Aylmer ON N5H 2R4
Dusty Underhill
generalmanager@catfishcreek.ca

Central Lake Ontario CA

100 Whiting Avenue
Oshawa ON L1H 3T3
Chris Darling
cdarling@cloca.com

Credit Valley CA

1255 Old Derry Rd
Mississauga ON L5N 6R4
Quentin Hanchard
quentin.hancard@cvc.ca

Crowe Valley CA

Box 416
70 Hughes Lane
Marmora ON K0K 2M0
Tim Pidduck
tim.pidduck@crowevalley.com

Essex Region CA

Suite 311
360 Fairview Ave West
Essex ON N8M 1Y6
Tim Byrne
tbyrne@erca.org

Ganaraska Region CA

Box 328
2216 County Road 28
Port Hope ON L1A 3V8
Linda Laliberte
llaliberte@grca.on.ca

Grand River CA

Box 729
400 Clyde Road
Cambridge ON N1R 5W6
Samantha Lawson
slawson@grandriver.ca

Grey Sauble CA

R.R. #4
237897 Inglis Falls Road
Owen Sound ON N4K 5N6
Tim Lanthier
t.lanthier@greysauble.on.ca

Halton Region CA

2596 Britannia Road West
Burlington ON L7P 0G3
Hassaan Basit
hbasit@hrca.on.ca

Hamilton Region CA

P.O. Box 81067
838 Mineral Springs Road
Ancaster ON L9G 4X1
Lisa Burnside
lisa.burnside@conservationhamilton.ca

Kawartha Region CA

277 Kenrei (Park) Road
Lindsay ON K9V 4R1
Mark Majchrowski
mmajchrowski@kawarthaconservation.com

Kettle Creek CA

R.R. #8
44015 Ferguson Line
St. Thomas ON N5P 3T3
Elizabeth VanHooren
elizabeth@kettlecreekconservation.on.ca

Lake Simcoe Region CA

Box 282
120 Bayview Parkway
Newmarket ON L3Y 3W3
Rob Baldwin
r.baldwin@lsrca.on.ca

Lakehead Region CA

Box 10427
130 Conservation Road
Thunder Bay ON P7B 6T8
Tammy Cook
tammy@lakeheadca.com

Long Point Region CA

4 Elm Street
Tillsonburg ON N4G 0C4
Judy Maxwell
jmaxwell@lprca.on.ca

Lower Thames Valley CA

100 Thames Street
Chatham ON N7L 2Y8
Mark Peacock
mark.peacock@ltvca.ca

Lower Trent Region CA

R.R. #1
714 Murray Street
Trenton ON K8V 5P4
Rhonda Bateman
rhonda.bateman@lrc.on.ca

Maitland Valley CA

Box 127
1093 Marietta Street
Wroxeter ON N0G 2X0
Phil Beard
pbeard@mvca.on.ca

Mattagami Region CA

100 Lakeshore Road
Timmins ON P4N 8R5
David Vallier
david.vallier@timmins.ca

Mississippi Valley CA

10970 Highway 7
Carleton Place ON K7C 3P1
Sally McIntyre
smcintyre@mvc.on.ca

Niagara Peninsula CA

250 Thorold Road West, 3rd Floor
Welland ON L3C 3W2
Chandra Sharma
csharma@npca.ca

Nickel District CA

199 Larch St
Suite 401
Sudbury ON P3E 5P9
Carl Jorgensen
carl.jorgensen@conservationsudbury.ca

North Bay-Mattawa CA

15 Janey Avenue
North Bay ON P1C 1N1
Chitra Gowda
chitra.gowda@nbmca.ca

Nottawasaga Valley CA

8195 Line 8
Utopia ON L0M 1T0
Doug Hevenor
dhevenor@nvca.on.ca

Otonabee Region CA

250 Milroy Drive
Peterborough ON K9H 7M9
Janette Loveys Smith
jsmith@otonabeeconservation.com

Quinte CA

R.R. #2
2061 Old Highway #2
Belleville ON K8N 4Z2
Brad McNevin
bmcnevin@quinteconservation.ca

Raisin Region CA

PO Box 429
18045 County Road 2
Cornwall ON K6H 5T2
Richard Pilon
richard.pilon@rrca.on.ca

Rideau Valley CA

Box 599
3889 Rideau Valley Dr.
Manotick ON K4M 1A5
Sommer Casgrain-Robertson
sommer.casgrain-robertson@rvca.ca

Saugeen Valley CA

R.R. #1
1078 Bruce Road #12, Box #150
Formosa ON N0G 1W0
Jennifer Stephens
j.stephens@svca.on.ca

Sault Ste. Marie Region CA

1100 Fifth Line East
Sault Ste. Marie ON P6A 6J8
Corrina Barrett
cbarrett@ssmrca.ca

South Nation River CA

38 Victoria Street
P.O. Box 29
Finch ON K0C 1K0
Carl Bickerdike
cbickerdike@nation.on.ca

St. Clair Region CA

205 Mill Pond Crescent
Strathroy ON N7G 3P9
Ken Phillips
kphillips@scrca.on.ca

Toronto and Region CA

101 Exchange Avenue
Vaughan ON L4K 5R6
John MacKenzie
john.mackenzie@trca.ca

Upper Thames River CA

1424 Clarke Road
London ON N5V 5B9
Tracey Annett
annettt@thamesriver.on.ca

Good afternoon:

I am writing to inform you of recent updates under the *Conservation Authorities Act* (the act) regarding the regulation of development for the protection of people and property from natural hazards in Ontario. Amendments to the act that were made in recent years to update the conservation authorities permitting framework and associated regulations will come into effect on April 1, 2024. These changes will clarify and streamline regulatory requirements to focus on natural hazards and public safety and provide greater transparency in the permitting process.

Updated rules for the protection of people and property from natural hazards

Effective April 1, 2024, updated permitting related provisions of the act will come into effect, supported by a new Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits, which set out prohibited activities and areas where a conservation authority permit is required, exemptions for permits for certain low-risk activities, the process for applying for a conservation authority permit, and service requirements for conservation authorities in reviewing permit applications. The new rules will apply to all conservation authorities and replace the existing 36 conservation authority-specific regulations.

Key changes include:

- Updating some definitions and areas where development activities are prohibited, while maintaining important provincial standards.
- Requirements for mapping of regulated areas to be made available online and for public notification to be given of any changes.
- Exemptions from the requirement for a conservation authority permit for some low-risk activities, subject to certain conditions, such as sheds, removable docks, garage rebuilds, fencing, and agricultural drainage.
- Limiting the conditions that can be included on a permit to matters related to natural hazards and public safety and general permit administration.
- Service standards for permit issuance including pre-consultation and confirmation of complete applications within 21-days and requiring annual reporting on permitting statistics including reporting on the level of conservation authority compliance with new regulatory requirements.
- Enabling applicants to appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) if a permit decision is not made within 90-days and appeals of permitting fees charged by conservation authorities to the OLT.
- Enabling Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry's tools regarding the review of permit decisions and the issuance of permits.
- Updated enforcement powers and offence provisions under the act, including stop work orders and increased penalties.

A decision notice is now available at the Environmental Registry of Ontario, posting #019-2927: [Proposed updates to the regulation of development for the protection of people and property from natural hazards in Ontario](#).

Minister's Fee Direction

I would also like to notify you that the Minister has extended his Direction (through the issuance of a new Direction) to conservation authorities to not change any fees charged as part of their programs and services associated with planning, development, and permitting. This extended direction is in effect as of January 1, 2024, until December 31, 2024.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry at ca.office@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Keyes
Director, Resources Planning and Development Policy Branch
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

Minister Smith,

We, the elected leaders of the municipalities of the Upper Thames River watershed, are requesting your help in addressing budget pressures that all municipalities are facing. We ask that you do so by rescinding your Direction to conservation authorities to freeze the fees associated with planning, development, and permitting.

This freeze on fees has led to every resident in our municipalities having to pay more property taxes to cover the increased level of service that is required to meet the timelines enacted through Bills 108 and 109.

The inability of the conservation authorities to increase fees to offset the costs required to meet demand and increased service levels, requires that the authorities increase the levy to their member municipalities. This, in turn, requires the municipalities to increase property taxes to our residents.

While the need for increased housing is understood, the cost associated with that development should not be placed on current residents through increased property taxes.

Freezing the development and application fees has the greatest impact on conservation authorities located in high-growth areas of the province. Since 2021, provincial population reports reflect that municipalities within the Upper Thames River watershed are the fastest growing in Ontario. Corresponding to this population growth is a large increase in the number of planning, development, and permit applications.

Conservation authorities are partners in ensuring that development can happen in a timely, safe manner. We need them to be able to provide the services required to meet the province's goals without increasing the burden of current rate payers. The use of fees to fund this type of program ensures that those benefiting from development are paying for it -- growth pays for growth. This is the fairest funding system for this type of program.

We support conservation authorities offsetting program costs through fees as much as possible and request that you grant them the ability to do so. Failing that, we request that the Ministry increase the transfer payments to conservation authorities to replace the lost income that the freeze has created.

Mayor Josh Morgan, City of London

Warden Marcus Ryan, County of Oxford, Mayor, Township of Zorra

Mayor Martin Ritsma, City of Stratford

Mayor Jerry Acchione, City of Woodstock
Mayor Al Strathdee, Town of St. Marys
Mayor Brian Petrie, Town of Ingersoll
Mayor Cathy Burghardt-Jesson, Township of Lucan-Biddulph
Mayor George Finch, Municipality of South Huron
Mayor Jim Aitcheson, Township of Perth South
Mayor Rhonda Ehgoetz, Township of Perth East
Mayor Walter McKenzie, Municipality of West Perth
Mayor Sharon McMillan, Municipality of Thames Centre
Mayor Aina DeViet, Municipality of Middlesex Centre
Mayor Philip Schaefer, Township of East-Zorra Tavistock
Mayor David Mayberry, Township of South-West Oxford
Mayor Mark Peterson, Township of Blandford-Blenheim
Mayor Jim Palmer, Township of Norwich