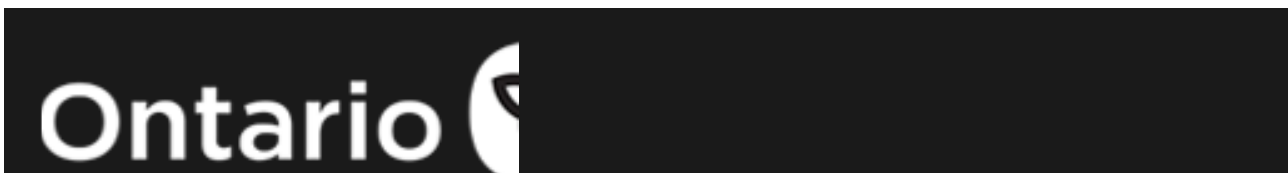


Kelly Lush

From: Kelly Lush
Sent: October 31, 2025 10:51 AM
To: Kelly Lush
Subject: FW: Ontario Creating New Conservation Authority Agency to Improve Service Delivery and Protect Communities

From: Ontario News <do.not.reply@ontario.ca>
Sent: October 31, 2025 10:08 AM
To: Jennifer White <jwhite@huronkinloss.com>
Subject: Ontario Creating New Conservation Authority Agency to Improve Service Delivery and Protect Communities



NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Creating New Conservation Authority Agency to Improve Service Delivery and Protect Communities

Agency will oversee key improvement projects, including a proposed regional consolidation

October 31, 2025

[Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks](#)

Toronto — The Ontario government will soon introduce legislation to create the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) with the aim of improving the province’s conservation authority system to help get shovels in the ground faster on homes and other local infrastructure projects, while strengthening the vital role conservation authorities play in managing watersheds and protecting communities from floods and natural hazards. This action will help the province deliver on its plan to protect Ontario by cutting red tape and building an economy that is more competitive, resilient and self-reliant, to help keep workers on the job in the face of tariffs and economic uncertainty.

“Conservation authorities play a vital role in protecting our communities and managing our watersheds, but the system has become too fragmented, inconsistent and outdated,” said Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. “The new, dedicated agency would work with conservation leaders to ensure faster, more transparent permitting and more front-line services so we can reduce delays to



get shovels in the ground sooner, support economic growth and keep our communities safe from floods and other natural hazards.”

Ontario currently has a fragmented system of 36 conservation authorities, each of which have different policies, standards, fees and levels of staffing and technical capabilities. This has led to unpredictable and inconsistent turnaround times for approvals across all conservation authorities, creating uncertainty and delays for builders, landowners and farmers seeking permits and undermining conservation authorities’ ability to protect communities from floods and natural hazards.

To address these issues, the OPCA will provide centralized leadership, efficient governance, strategic direction and oversight of all conservation authorities. The agency will free-up resources for front-line conservation and ensure faster, more consistent and transparent permitting, while supporting conservation authorities in their core mandate of managing watersheds and protecting people and property from natural hazards in an efficient and consistent manner.

The agency will be tasked with leading key modernization projects, including:

- developing a single digital permitting platform to provide a faster, more predictable approvals process and improved customer service
- streamlining and standardizing service delivery by setting clear, provincewide performance standards and support their consistent application by conservation authorities with centralized data and updated floodplain mapping
- overseeing the implementation of a regional, watershed-based consolidation of conservation authorities

Under the leadership of the new agency, conservation authorities will continue to deliver existing programs such as protecting people and property from natural hazards, drinking water source protection and the management of lands and recreational trails, including public access to local natural areas, as well as other recreational and educational activities.

“The Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency will work with conservation authorities to reduce duplication, implement consistent processes and standards, and leverage shared technology and other resources,” said Hassaan Basit, Chief Conservation Executive.

“With better tools and more resources for front-line staff, local conservation authorities will have a greater ability to use technical data, research and analysis to make decisions, operate with greater consistency and transparency, and deliver faster services to municipalities, residents and permit applicants.”

In the coming weeks the government plans to introduce legislation to establish the proposed agency. As part of that work, the government will soon begin consultations with the public, municipalities, stakeholders, Indigenous communities and other



partners on a watershed-based consolidation of conservation authorities, including the proposed regional boundaries of each conservation authority based on the following criteria:

- maintaining watershed-based jurisdictions for effective flood and water management
- reducing administrative overlap and duplication for municipalities and conservation authorities
- balancing expertise and capacity across conservation authorities to improve service and program delivery
- ensuring uninterrupted delivery of local conservation authority programs

Under the current system, more than half of all municipalities in areas served by conservation authorities fall within the jurisdiction of two or more conservation authorities, resulting in unnecessary duplication that diverts resources from front-line conservation work and service delivery. If the consolidation is implemented as proposed, this would be reduced by 63 per cent.

Individual conservation authorities have significant disparities in size and resources, with some lacking access to the latest tools and technology that support flood risk management and evidence-based decision making. Consolidation would enable more consistent service delivery and more efficient resource and information sharing, making conservation authorities more responsive to the needs of the communities they serve.

Quick Facts

- Unique to Ontario, conservation authorities develop and deliver local, watershed-based resource management programs on behalf of the province and municipalities, including programs aimed at preventing natural hazards, drinking water source protection and surface water and groundwater monitoring programs.
- As part of their responsibilities, conservation authorities issue permits for development activities such as housing, installation of sewage systems in areas affected by risks of natural hazards such as floodplains, shorelines and wetlands.

Additional Resources

[Learn more about Ontario's conservation authorities.](#)

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