

November 30, 2020

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Standing Committee on Finance & Economic Affairs
99 Wellesley Street West
Room 1405 Whitney Block
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A2

Re: Submission with respect to Bill 229 (Budget Measures Act), Schedule 6 – Changes to the Conservation Authorities Act

Dear Members of the Committee,

Over the past decades the Province of Ontario has been an innovator when it comes to developing a progressive and all-encompassing model to manage our watersheds. Municipalities lead the way in developing a conservation model that protected watersheds. This included floodplain management; floodplain mapping; erosion prevention; water quality management of our lakes and rivers; and development of programs and services meant to enhance and protect ecosystems, our lakes and streams, our wetlands and maintain our forests. The larger Conservation Authorities developed enhanced planning services and brokered trade-offs to support municipalities in housing and industrial development activities impacting our floodplains and ecosystems. Climate resilience was the motto and this was vitally important to Ontario and its continued economic success over the years.

The many proposed changes to Conservation Authorities in Schedule 6 of Bill 229 will not continue to advance the successes we have had in the past in conservation management through the partnership of Ontario's Conservation Authorities and municipalities.

I recognize that changes are needed to ensure the consistency of approach to maintain our ecosystems through systematic scientific research and monitoring, how Conservation Authorities work with municipalities on many of the larger issues facing Ontario with the many environmental impacts on the Great Lakes, forest destruction, wetland destruction, floodplain management and future urban development and expansion. But to propose legislative changes like the ones included in Schedule 6 of Bill 229 is a retrogressive step to Ontario's approach to climate resilience, conservation management and planning to protect our watersheds.

I strongly recommend that the Government of Ontario withdraw the changes set out in Schedule 6 of Bill 229. The path to the future is based on what our municipalities have mapped out for us in year's past. Build resilience in the system, manage the floodplains, enhance conservation management in

the municipal planning system, enhance programs and services which will support conservation management of ecosystems, our land, forests, lakes and rivers within our watersheds. Integrate watershed conservation into how we manage, plan and regulate in our municipalities. Monitor our streams and lakes using a science-based approach consistent across watersheds. Develop a conservation approach which is effective and efficient.

Conservation Authorities have an integrated approach to watershed management and maintain a close partnership with the interests of our municipalities and their residents. Their approach is constructive and can be built upon to achieve what municipalities want and which will meet with the expectations of their residents. An integrated approach needs to be supported and enhanced. The approach taken through the changes proposed in Schedule 6 of Bill 229 is fragmented, disjointed and will only serve to work against an integrated approach to watershed management.

Yours truly,

Lyle Pederson

cc. Minister Rod Phillips

cc. Minister Yakabuski

cc. Minister Yurek

cc. Minister Clark