

Media Release

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Conservation Authorities Pleased with Proposed Changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act*

NEWMARKET (June 14, 2017) Conservation Authorities are pleased with changes being proposed by the Ontario government to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and look forward to following up on implementation as outlined in a new document released today by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR).

“We’re very pleased that the proposed changes confirm the important role of Conservation Authorities as valuable *watershed-based* natural resource managers in Ontario,” said Kim Gavine, General Manager of Conservation Ontario the agency which represents Ontario’s 36 Conservation Authorities.

“And, according to the Province, they will explore options for updating provincial funding levels around existing provincially mandated programs such as natural hazards and potentially new ones such as wetland conservation and climate change”.

In its June 14, 2017 statement, the Province outlined that the intent of the amended legislation is to enable the Conservation Authorities to address growing environmental pressures while improving accountability and oversight of Conservation Authorities.

The details of how these changes will evolve is mapped out through a provincial document, *Conserving Our Future: A Modernized Conservation Authorities Act*. In addition to providing long term workplan priorities for implementing changes proposed in the new legislation, it also reflects the feedback heard from stakeholders over the two year consultation period.

The Province’s proposed changes address five key priorities identified and promoted by Conservation Ontario and the Conservation Authorities throughout the consultation stages.

Specifically, they:

1. confirm the broad and important role of Conservation Authorities as valuable watershed-based natural resource managers in Ontario,
2. commit to explore options for updating provincial funding levels for existing provincially mandated programs such as natural hazards and potentially new programs such as wetland conservation and climate change adaptation,
3. establish a multi-ministry table to ensure increased coordination among provincial ministries regarding the wide range of support CAs provide to the multiple ministries,
4. require conservation authorities to meet public sector best management practices and standards, and

5. establish a multi-stakeholder Service Delivery Committee to address client service issues.

Conservation Ontario will be submitting a response to the posting of the proposed changes.

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