

November 18, 2020

Doug Ford, Premier
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Sent via email: premier@ontario.ca

To whom it may concern:

Re: Grey Highlands Council resolution re: Bill 229

Please be advised that the following resolution was passed at the November 18, 2020 meeting of the Council of the Municipality of Grey Highlands.

2020-747

Cathy Little, Dane Nielsen

Whereas the Province has introduced Bill 229, Protect, Support and Recover from COVID 19 Act - Schedule 6 – Conservation Authorities Act; and

Whereas the Legislation introduces a number of changes and new sections that could remove and/or significantly hinder the conservation authorities' role in regulating development, permit appeal process and engaging in review and appeal of planning applications; and

Whereas we, the Municipality of Grey Highlands, rely on the watershed expertise provided by local conservation authorities to protect residents, property and local natural resources on a watershed basis by regulating development and engaging in reviews of applications submitted under the Planning Act; and

Whereas the changes allow the Minister to make decisions without CA watershed data and expertise; and

Whereas the Legislation suggests that the Minister will have the ability to establish standards and requirements for non-mandatory programs which are negotiated between the conservation authorities and municipalities to meet local watershed needs; and

Whereas these proposed changes will impact Ontario's ability to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change by undermining the work of conservation authorities to keep development out of high risk areas and protect natural infrastructure; and

Whereas municipalities require a longer transition time to put in place agreements with conservation authorities for non-mandatory programs; and

Whereas municipalities believe that the appointment of municipal representatives on conservation authority Boards should be a municipal decision; and the Chair and Vice Chair of the conservation authority Board should be elected as per the discretion of the conservation authority Board; and

Whereas the changes to the 'Duty of Members' contradicts the fiduciary duty of a conservation authority board member to represent the best interests of the conservation authority and its responsibility to the watershed; and

Whereas conservation authorities have already been working with the Province, development sector and municipalities to streamline and speed up permitting and planning approvals through Conservation Ontario's Client Service and Streamlining Initiative; and

Whereas changes to the legislation will create more administrative burden and costs for the conservation authorities, and their municipal partners, and potentially result in delays in the development approval process; and

Whereas the combined contribution of municipal levy and self-generated revenues support 93% of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority budget; and

Whereas the Provincial contribution to this budget is 7%, the majority of which is for Drinking Water Source Protection; and

Whereas municipalities value and rely on the natural habitats and water resources within our jurisdiction for the health and well-being of residents; municipalities value the conservation authorities' work to prevent and manage the impacts of flooding and other natural hazards; and municipalities value the conservation authority's work to ensure safe drinking water; now

Therefore be it resolved that the Province of Ontario work with conservation authorities to address their concerns by removing Schedule 6 from Bill 229 which affects changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and the Planning Act; and

That the Province of Ontario delay enactment of clauses affecting municipal concerns; and

That the Province of Ontario provide a longer transition period up to December 2022 for non-mandatory programs to enable coordination of conservation authority-municipal budget processes; and

That the Province respect the current conservation authority/municipal relationships; and

That the Province embrace their long-standing partnership with the conservation authorities and provide them with the tools and financial resources they need to effectively implement their watershed management role.

CARRIED.

Sincerely,



Raylene Martell
Director of Legislative Services/Municipal Clerk
Municipality of Grey Highlands

The Municipality of Grey Highlands

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Cc: Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance (rod.phillips@pc.ola.org)
Hon. Jeff Yurek, Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks (jeff.yurek@pc.ola.org)
Hon. John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
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All Ontario Municipalities

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