

Board of Directors Motion, November 25, 2025

At the November 25, 2025, meeting, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) Board of Directors adopted the following motion. They further directed staff to circulate a letter to all member municipalities of the Upper Thames watershed and First Nation communities affected by the proposed change in geographic boundaries, with a focus on the economic and legal ramifications and other relevant ramifications of the proposed legislative changes by the province.

WHEREAS the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks has posted Environmental Registry Notice No. 025-1257 (“Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Conservation Authorities”), proposing to reduce Ontario’s 36 conservation authorities to 7 regional entities as part of a broader restructuring that would create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide centralized oversight and direction under the Conservation Authorities Act;

AND WHEREAS under this proposal, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) would be merged into a new “Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority” together with the: Essex Region CA, Lower Thames Valley CA, St. Clair Region CA, Kettle Creek CA, Catfish Creek CA, Long Point Region CA, and Grand River CA, forming a single organization stretching from Windsor, through London, Brantford, and north of Waterloo region;

AND WHEREAS the Board acknowledges and supports the Province’s goals of improved efficiency, consistency, and fiscal responsibility in conservation delivery, but find that the proposed “Lake Erie Region” configuration would create a geographically vast and administratively complex entity; dilute local accountability and municipal partnership; generate substantial transition costs, including human resources integration, governance restructuring, IT migration, and policy harmonization that would divert resources from the front-line service delivery making it hard for applicants to obtain timely local advice, resolve issues, or expedite housing and infrastructure approvals that support the Province’s goals;

AND WHEREAS UTRCA has always worked with its member municipalities, the province, and partners to be fiscally responsible while ensuring the conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources within the upper Thames River watershed including modernizing its programs and services and aligning them with provincial guidance and neighbouring CAs and will continue to do so;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT UTRCA Board of Directors does not support the proposed “Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration outlined in the Environment Registry Notice 02-1257; and the Board instead requests that the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities and conservation authorities to evaluate a reduced geographic scope for consolidation that better reflects established relationships and enhances cost-efficient delivery of integrated watershed management, grassroots connections, and local understanding;

AND FINALLY THAT this resolution be forwarded to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, local members of Provincial Parliament, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Rural Ontario Municipalities Association, all municipalities and CAs within the proposed Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority, and Conservation Ontario.