



**Office of the Mayor**

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The Honourable Jeff Yurek  
Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)  
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks  
777 Bay St., 5th Floor  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 2J3

February 5, 2020

Dear Minister:

We are pleased that our municipality had the opportunity to participate in your Ministry's consultations on the *Conservation Authorities Act* and forthcoming regulations. There were many stakeholders and partners in attendance providing a variety of local interests and perspectives.

To follow up on these consultations, we are sending this letter to reiterate our support for Ontario's conservation authorities (CAs) and to encourage the Province to find a way forward that strengthens rather than diminishes the role of CAs.

We want to assure you that Burlington appreciates and relies on our conservation authority, Conservation Halton, for its local watershed and technical expertise.

Through the many programs and services they offer, Ontario's CAs, including Conservation Halton:

- provide the technical expertise, at the request of and through agreement with the municipalities, around natural heritage for land-use planning which enables municipalities to fulfill their responsibilities around the Provincial Policy Statement (e.g. review of Official Plans and Plan amendments);
- manage and mitigate the impact of natural hazards (e.g. plan review, flood forecasting & warning, flood and hazard lands, erosion control operations/maintenance, ice management);
- act as source protection authorities under the *Clean Water Act* and work very closely with municipalities through the local source protection committees and with our infrastructure staff;
- deliver watershed-wide environmental monitoring programs;
- help us fight climate change; and
- provide opportunities for many outreach and education programs and activities which are very popular with Ontarians.


Our residents value the access to nature by the authority owned and managed conservation areas – affordable, local recreational opportunities which fill a gap between local municipal parks and provincial parks.

Conservation authority programs and services help local municipalities to ensure the health and safety of its residents as well protect important natural resources – and they do this in a cost-effective way. The conservation authority watershed-based model was, in fact, praised by the provincial flood advisor in a report reviewing the 2019 flooding.

Many of the conservation authorities' watershed management programs support important provincial priorities such as addressing climate change impacts, protecting the Great Lakes, supporting a vibrant agricultural and industrial economic sector and ensuring the health and safety of all people from natural hazards, drinking water threats and stressed natural resources.

Please ensure that your next steps in developing the CA Act regulations gives significant consideration to the needs of municipalities and our critical partnership with our conservation authorities. We need time to review and revise our financial model with our CAs, and to develop and enter into the multitude of MOUs that will be required. We must do this within our fiscal year timelines. We wish to have a seat at the table, along with the CAs and staff of other provincial ministries (MNRF and MMAH) to ensure that the programs and services we rely upon are included in the regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marianne Meed Ward', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward  
City of Burlington

*c.c. John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry*

*Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing*

*Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario*

*LOCAL MPPs*