



RE: Propose Changes to the Conservation Authorities Act: Schedule 6 of Bill 229

Please be advised that Township of Puslinch Council, at its meeting held on November 18, 2020 considered the aforementioned topic and subsequent to discussion, the following was resolved:

Resolution No. 2020-331: Moved by Councillor Bulmer and
Seconded by Councillor Sepulis

That the Consent Agenda items 6.2, 6.3, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, and 6.13 be received; and

GIVEN THAT The Township of Puslinch does not want to see an increased risk to public safety, or increased liabilities to the Province, municipalities, and conservation authorities. Nor does the Township of Puslinch want more red tape, disruption and ultimately delays in helping the government achieve its goal of economic recovery; and

GIVEN the time sensitive nature of this Bill, we encourage the Province to consult with Municipalities and Conservation Authorities in an expedient manner; and

GIVEN that the Township of Puslinch feels that there are better solutions to deal with actual and perceived issues.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Township of Puslinch respectfully requests the Province to withdraw Schedule 6 from Bill 229 until a more thorough analysis of the appropriate solutions can take place, with more clarity on what problems were identified through the consultation process. The Township of Puslinch also encourage the Province to engage with municipalities and Conservation Authorities as the Province works on regulations that will eventually define the various Conservation Authorities Act clauses. The Township of Puslinch feels this is critical to ensure that the focus and performance of Conservation Authorities is actually improved where required.

FURTHER that this resolution be forwarded to the Premier, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing,



the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, Minister of Finance, Conservation Ontario, MPP Ted Arnott, and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED

As per the above resolution, please accept a copy of this correspondence for your information and consideration.

Sincerely,
Courtenay Hoytfox
Deputy Clerk

For Immediate Release

November 12, 2020

Cause for Alarm Over Proposed Changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act*

BURLINGTON— Conservation Halton (CH) has reviewed the Province’s proposed changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CA Act) which were released last week in the 2020 Ontario Budget (Bill 229). CH is encouraged that the purpose of the Act to provide for the organization and delivery of programs and services that further conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources in Ontario watersheds remains. CH remains fully supportive of the Province’s stated intent to modernize the watershed-based scope, good governance, service delivery and sustainability of all Conservation Authorities (CAs). CH is, however, concerned that some of the proposed amendments will significantly diminish the ability of CAs to ensure that both people and property are safe from natural hazards, while also protecting Ontario’s environment.

The proposed amendments would grant new powers to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry that would allow the Minister to make decisions regarding permit applications and appeals in place of the CA, without the non-partisan technical input and expertise of CAs. Bill 229 also proposes amendments to the *Planning Act*, which if passed, would prohibit CAs from appealing a municipal planning decision to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) or becoming a party to an appeal before LPAT. While there are currently checks and balances in place to ensure the safe development of communities, CH is concerned that new amendments will allow circumvention that leaves the possibility for development decisions that are both unsafe and negatively impact the environment.

“There are a number of disappointing proposed changes that have the potential to undermine conservation authorities and our ability to make science-based watershed management decisions in the interest of public health and safety,” said Hassaan Basit, CEO of Conservation Halton. “Living through the pandemic, we have seen first-hand just how important our environment and wetlands are to our residents. We do not want to see any decisions made that increase the risks from natural hazards, especially as we continue to work to mitigate climate change and conserve our watershed to allow for responsible growth today, without sacrificing the right of future generations to do the same.”

CH views the governance changes calling for municipal councillors to make up the sole membership of the Board, while also being instructed to represent the interests of their respective municipalities, and not those of the CA or watershed residents, extremely problematic. This will create an environment in which fiduciary duties and responsibilities to the conservation authority are not upheld.

Further, CH is disappointed in the proposed removal of the un-proclaimed stop work orders and limitations on power to entry provisions that this government had previously agreed to grant CAs. The removal of this tool takes away the ability to enforce regulations that keep life and property safe. It also diminishes the ability to address environmental violations early and work with stakeholders to remedy problems, leaving no tools but to pursue costly and time-consuming charges through the courts when violations occur.

While CH waits for updated regulations to better understand how the proposed amendments are to be implemented, it is concerned that there may be many unintended consequences that put the environment and communities at risk, through opaque and financially costly decisions.

As a result of these collective concerns, CH encourages residents of the watershed, its network of supporters, and partner municipalities to reach out to the Premier, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, as well as their local MPPs over the next two weeks to request that they review and address its concerns before this Bill is enacted.

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Conservation Halton is the community based environmental agency that protects, restores, and manages the natural resources in its watershed. The organization has staff that includes ecologists, land use planners, engineers, foresters and educators, along with a network of volunteers, who are guided by a Board of Directors comprised of municipally elected and appointed citizens. Conservation Halton is recognized for its stewardship of creeks, forests and Niagara Escarpment lands through science-based programs and services.

Media Contact

Stephanie Bright
Public Relations Specialist
Conservation Halton
Email: sbright@hrca.on.ca



A Healthy Watershed for Everyone

For Immediate Release: Friday, November 13, 2020

HCA's preliminary response to the Province's proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act

On November 5, the Province released proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act as part of its omnibus bill of the provincial budget. The Province has stated they are amending the Act to improve transparency and consistency in conservation authority operation, strengthen municipal oversight and streamline conservation authority roles in permitting and land use planning. Additional regulations under the Act are still to be provided later this fall.

Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) staff have reviewed the proposed changes and support enhanced conservation transparency and accountability which is already undertaken by making key documents publicly available; including meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and annual audits. We are encouraged that the Province has reconfirmed our purpose to provide for conservation, restoration source water protection and natural resources management.

However, while we wait for updated regulations to better understand how the changes are to be implemented, we are concerned that proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and the Planning Act if passed, would reduce our ability to protect the natural environment and our watershed, and remove citizen representation on our Board.

Proposed changes provide new appeal avenues for permit applications to go to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) and even the ability of the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry to issue certain permits in place of the conservation authority. An appeal process already exists to applicants directly to the HCA Board. Conservation authorities are important agencies who help protect Ontario's environment. Their science-based watershed information helps to steer development to appropriate places where it will not harm the environment or create risks to people.

The Province also proposes an amendment to the Planning Act, which if passed, would not allow conservation authorities to appeal a municipal planning decision to the LPAT to represent our interests, unless requested through an agreement with the municipality or the Province. To date, this has not been an issue with the Hamilton Conservation Authority but is an important tool to have. This could also impact our right to appeal planning decisions as a landowner. This is a concern as our conservation lands, made up of 11,000 acres of forests, 145 km of trails, fields, streams, wildlife and plant life, are under HCA's care and protection, as they have been for over 60 years.



A Healthy Watershed for Everyone

Conservation authorities have long requested for the ability to issue stop work orders to protect environmentally sensitive areas. The updated Act removes un-proclaimed provisions for this enhanced enforcement and only retains the current tools such as fines and possible prosecution and these existing tools do not provide the ability to effectively stop any significant threats and impacts.

If passed, HCA would lose citizen representatives on its board who currently make up half the board of directors. These members provide expertise in varied fields and provide input on HCA programs and services from a citizen's point of view. The proposed amendments would also require municipally appointed councillors to make decisions in the best interest of the municipality and not the conservation authority and its watershed. This is contrary to proper board governance.

In these stressful times, nature and the outdoors play an important role in people's mental and physical health. After this year, we have seen just how important these spaces, and that protection, is for our community. We will continue promoting our vision of a healthy watershed for everyone. HCA staff will also continue to work collaboratively with all parties to better understand and determine what these changes will mean for conservation authorities in general and for the protection of our watersheds.

Public consultation is not required on these proposals as it has been incorporated as part of the budget. We encourage our watershed residents, municipal partners and supporters to reach out to the Premier, the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks and the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry as well as their local MPP's to ask them to address the concerns outlined above, before the Bill is enacted.

Media Contact:

Councillor Lloyd Ferguson, HCA Chair
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lloyd.ferguson@hamilton.ca

Lisa Burnside, HCA CAO
905-525-2181, ext. 126
Lisa.Burnside@conservationhamilton.ca

This media release has been formatted to be an accessible document. Should you require this information in an alternate format, please contact the Hamilton Conservation Authority at 905-525-2181 and we will be happy to assist you.

Coronation Park
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

November 14, 2020

Hon. Doug Ford
Hon. Jeff Yurek
Hon. John Yakabuski
Hon. Steve Clark
MPP Stephen Crawford

Re: Bill 229 - Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act (Budget Measures), 2020. Schedule 6:Conservation Authorities Act

As voting citizens, we register our strong objections to Schedule 6 of Bill 229 and recommend it not be enacted in its present form, and be withdrawn in its entirety from Bill 229.

We are shocked to find our legislators using a Bill purported to be a plan for recovery from a global pandemic as a vehicle to undermine the powers of our Conservation Authorities (CA) and jeopardize our protected forests and wetlands.

As Canadians, we are deeply troubled by the ever increasing regularity of our provincial government's propensity toward omnibus bills which limit opportunities for debate and scrutiny. Indeed, we find on the same day the government tabled Bill 229, an Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) bulletin titled *Updating the Conservation Authorities Act*3 (ERO # 019-2646) was also posted stating that public consultation is not required under Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights, 19934 (EBR), because the proposed amendments form part of a budget.

It is shameful to think that as our collective focus is on dealing with Covid-19 and its severe impacts on our lives and livelihoods, our elected officials table legislation to make substantive changes to environmental laws while sidestepping the public's EBR rights.

At a time when it is becoming increasingly more evident that we need climate resilience, it appears the package of amendments as proposed in Schedule 6 are likely to set back watershed planning and implementation of an ecosystem-based approach by decades. Conservation Authorities are a vital line of defence for the natural spaces that mitigate flood risk, provide precious land for hiking, fishing and escape into nature and are an essential habitat for the many species of wildlife, including endangered species that call Ontario home. If we lose these spaces, we can't get them back.

The majority of the Schedule 6 amendments are regressive in nature and are completely contradictory to fulfilling both the purpose of the Conservation Authorities Act and the desire to set the course for more climate resilient communities in the future.

If enacted, Schedule 6 would

- give direct decision making power over proposed development in environmentally sensitive areas, to the Minister of Natural Resources and allow the Minister to make decisions regarding permit applications and appeals in place of the Conservation Authority, thereby eliminating the non-partisan technical input and expertise of CAs.
- allow developers to appeal conservation authority decisions directly to the Minister.
- prohibit CAs from appealing a municipal planning decision to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) or becoming a party to an appeal before LPAT.
- have the potential to undermine conservation authorities and their ability to make science-based watershed management decisions in the interest of public health and safety.
- institute governance changes to CA boards to have municipal councillors comprise the sole membership, while being instructed to represent the interests of their respective municipalities, and not those of the CA or watershed residents. This will create an environment in which fiduciary duties and responsibilities to the conservation authority are not upheld.
- narrow the CAs authority from providing “programs and services designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal and minerals” (CAAct, s20(1)) to only one of three categories: (i) mandatory programs and services, (ii) municipal programs and services, and (iii) other programs and services (new CAAct provision 20(1)).

As constituents of Ontario, we have not be able to protect our population against a deadly pandemic, however we are able to direct our elected officials to take decisive steps to effectively protect, restore and manage our watersheds, protected forests and wildlife habitats thereby ensuring a climate resilient Ontario.

Our direction is to withdraw Schedule 6 in its entirety from Bill 229.

Respectfully,

Pamela Knight
President

Donald Cox
Vice President

cc: Oakville Town Council Members
A. Gohel



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Protecting the Natural
Environment from
Lake to Escarpment

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario

The Honourable Jeff Yurek
Minister of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks

The Honourable Rod Phillips
Minister of Finance
Ministry of Finance

November 17, 2020

Dear Premier Ford, Minister Yurek and Minister Phillips,

We are writing to you today in response to the proposed amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CA Act), contained in Schedule 6, Bill 229. **We anticipate that some of the more prescriptive changes proposed in Bill 229 will lead to the opposite of your government's stated desire to help conservation authorities (CA) modernize and operate with greater focus, transparency and efficiency.**

The Progressive Conservative Government under the leadership of George Drew passed the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the *Planning Act*. He recognized that Ontario needed to invest in a sound transformative strategy to help Ontarians recover from the devastation of World War Two, not just economically, but also emotionally, as a community. These progressive actions were further strengthened by Premier Frost. Today, as the Province faces unprecedented pressures from both, a global pandemic and climate change, we need to strengthen the cooperative role played by CAs.

For over 60 years, Conservation Halton (CH) has served the interests of its residents and stayed true to those founding principles – conserving the environment to enable watershed communities to prosper socially and economically while ensuring resilience and safety for generations to come. From planting four million trees, to managing 11,000 acres of land, teaching millions of children, ensuring people build their homes and businesses in safe places and constantly checking the pulse of our environment through monitoring and restoration, CH has been a trusted, accountable partner to the Province and our municipalities. Today, CH serves over one million residents in one of the fastest growing areas in Ontario. Our residents and municipalities depend on us to deliver cost-effective services that ensure growth and development support sustainable and vibrant communities.

CH has played a collaborative role in the previous consultations regarding the modernization of the CA Act. While it was unexpected to see further proposed changes to the Act in Bill 229, we are encouraged that the purpose of the Act to provide for the organization and delivery of programs and services that

further conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources in Ontario watersheds remains the same.

It is our view that several of the proposed amendments will increase the risk to life and property from natural hazards and the degradation of the environment. **We respectfully request you withdraw Schedule 6 from Bill 229 until a more thorough analysis of the appropriate solutions can take place, with more clarity on what problems were identified through the consultation process.** We also encourage you to engage with CAs as you work on regulations that will eventually define the limits of the various CA Act clauses. We feel this is critical to ensure that the focus and performance of CAs is actually improved.

Several changes, such as those related to governance, ministerial authority to issue permits, the removal of our ability to appeal decisions at LPAT, and the removal of enforcement tools will lead to increased administrative costs, red tape, delays, and above all bring into question the integrity and transparency of the permitting and planning process. **These changes will also result in a more uncertain, litigious and discordant atmosphere, which will hinder our ability to work with applicants to find practical solutions for safe development. These changes will undo the hard work CH has done over the last five years to ensure we are customer-centric, accountable, efficient and solutions oriented.** Specifically:

- **There is no duplication, red tape or going beyond our mandate**
CH and our municipal partners work in a complementary way, avoid duplication of effort and remain focused on our core responsibilities through detailed MOUs and workplans. CH worked with our partners and customers to develop clear, quantifiable service delivery targets, which we have achieved, and publicly reported on with consistency. We track all permitting and plan review metrics on a quarterly basis to ensure nothing is slipping.
- **Our permit/planning fees only cover the cost to review and we have high service standards**
CH works with the development industry to ensure there is transparency on how our fees are determined, what costs are included and what standard of service we deliver in exchange. This approach is highly appreciated by our BILD chapter and they have encouraged other agencies to adopt our approach. We will be happy to share correspondence to this effect with you. We work on a cost-recovery model to ensure we keep the cost to taxpayers as low as possible.
- **The integrity of the permitting process will be compromised – these amendments will increase risk, liability, delays, and lead to inconsistency**
CH currently issues 95% of minor permits and 98% of major permits within 30 and 90 review days respectively (not calendar days). We value the process as much as we value the output of our services in this area. It is our view that the proposed amendments that would allow the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry jurisdiction over certain permit applications and the appeal process has the potential to allow individuals to circumvent checks and balances that exist to protect the communities in our watersheds. It is unclear whether the minister would have regard for local conditions, technical input or Board-approved policies. These proposed changes may inadvertently cause more people in the community to be at risk, rather than protected, from natural hazards.
- **The amendments introduce a “stakeholder governance model” that has no legal precedence**
The proposed changes to the composition of CA boards negatively disrupts what is currently a relatively apolitical structure. This will significantly reduce the capacity of boards to make

decisions on a watershed basis. Our Board of Directors carry out their fiduciary responsibilities, guide strategy, approve policies in support of our Provincial and municipal responsibilities and track performance. They ensure CH makes decisions with integrity, based solely on our core responsibilities. It is our view that changing the composition to reflect elected officials that represent the interests of their respective municipalities creates a setting ripe for conflict of interest. It runs counter to all governance principles.

- **These amendments compromise our ability to create jobs & deliver services without tax dollars**
Conservation Halton is focused on our core programs. We are equally competent and resourceful in providing further opportunities for Ontarians in recreation and education on our conservation lands—especially during the pandemic when the need for safe and accessible greenspace is at an all-time high—and we are even more proud that we are able to fund these opportunities 100% self-sufficiently. Our responsible monetization of assets and generation of revenue creates value for the community as well as employment opportunities. We are concerned that should the Ministry set fees or other limits on non-mandatory programs and services—particularly those that we already successfully run without the support of tax dollars—our ability to provide important recreational, educational, and employment opportunities that allow our community to interact with conservation will be significantly diminished. Our municipal levy for 2021 is under 28% and the provincial contribution is close to 2% of our total budget. We have worked hard to achieve such low reliance on taxpayer funding. At the same time, we have expanded access to our parks by 35% this season, giving Ontario families a safe place to visit during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, we do not want to see an increased risk to public safety, or increased liabilities to the Province, municipalities, and conservation authorities. Nor do we want more red tape, disruption and ultimately delays in helping the government achieve its goal of economic recovery. Given the time sensitive nature of this Bill, we encourage the Province to consult with Conservation Halton and other CAs in an expedient manner. We have attached a more detailed (Board) report on our key concerns.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider our concerns. **We feel there are better solutions to deal with actual and perceived issues.** We would be pleased to discuss these and our desire to work with you to define the governing regulations at your earliest convenience. Please contact Conservation Halton CEO, Hassaan Basit (CEOoffice@hrca.on.ca) so we can help support your mandate while ensuring success for all stakeholders.

Regards,

Gerry Smallegange



Chair, Conservation Halton Board of Directors

Mayor Rob Burton, BA, MS



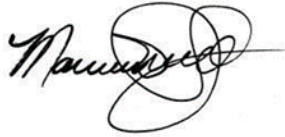
Town of Oakville

Mayor Gordon Krantz



Town of Milton

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward



City of Burlington

Mayor Rick Bonnette



Town of Halton Hills

Cc:

The Honourable John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Ted Arnott
MPP Wellington—Halton Hills

Jane McKenna
MPP Burlington

Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
MPP Oakville North—Burlington

Stephen Crawford
MPP Oakville

Parm Gill
MPP Milton

Andrea Horwath
MPP Hamilton Centre

Sandy Shaw
MPP Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas

Rudy Cuzzetto
MPP Mississauga—Lakeshore

Donna Skelly
MPP Flamborough-Glanbrook

Courtenay Hoytfox

From: Susan Fielding [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 4:05 PM
To: John Sepulis; James Seeley; Jessica Goyda; Sara Bailey; Matthew Bulmer; Glenn Schwendinger; Courtenay Hoytfox; Mayor Chris White
Subject: Comments of Conservation Authority Proposed Changes

Good afternoon Mayor and Councillors:

I was asked to share this email and I ask it be added to tomorrow's agenda along with the other correspondence from Hamilton and Halton Conservation Authorities. Any support you would consider lending to the concerns outlined would be most appreciated. The following email is from Councillor Tom Jackson, a long-time member of Hamilton Council and on the Hamilton Conservation Authority Board.

Subject: Province's Proposal to Eliminate Volunteer Citizen Members on THE HCA Board!!

Dear Mayor Eisenberger and Councillor (HCA Chairman) Ferguson....I heard with dismay and disappointment the above announcement in the last 48 hours!! IF The Province wishes to move forward on this, it will be an absolute shame and disservice to our encouragement of Citizen engagement and participation on an august Board such as the HCA. It boggles my mind why they would even consider going down this path??!! With all due respect to elected members of local Council....to have hypothetically an 11 member HCA Board of only politicians might as well make the HCA a Standing Committee of City Council. One of the treasures I have truly enjoyed over the years has been working alongside volunteer citizen appointees on any Task Force/Board/Advisory Committee, etc., because of the "blend" of elected and non-elected Board members sitting at the same table, assisting in the advancement (and preservation) of that Organization/Service/Agency's mandate/vision/goals TOGETHER!! Plus...on this current Board of 11 voting members, IF The Province's proposal is not withdrawn, 6 less citizens will have the chance to serve their Community on a dynamic and esteemed Board via the appointment process of City Council!! To conclude, if a resolution of our City Council is in order to forward MY (Hopefully OUR) objection to this misguided proposal, I am willing to assist with the motion OR instead to support anyone else that wishes to lead. Thanks for listening. Thoughts?? Councillor Jackson...P.S...HCA CAO Burnside or E.A. Tellier....Can you kindly ensure please that my email is forwarded to the citizen members of the HCA Board?? Thanks in advance. Councillor Jackson....P.P.S...(BTW Council Colleagues...this has nothing to do with the fact I am on the Board currently and do not wish other members of Council to possibly join. For what its worth...I left the Board after the 2014 Civic election to allow a new member of Council to join then.). Just sharing...
Councillor Tom Jackson

--

Susan Fielding

[REDACTED]

Courtenay Hoytfox

From: Glenn Schwendinger
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 9:00 AM
To: John Sepulis
Cc: Courtenay Hoytfox
Subject: RE: We Need Your Support: Changes to the Conservation Authorities Act

From: Conservation Halton <web@hrca.on.ca>
Reply-To: Conservation Halton <web@hrca.on.ca>
Date: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 6:29 PM
To: John Sepulis <jsepulis@puslinch.ca>
Subject: We Need Your Support: Changes to the Conservation Authorities Act

[View this email in your browser](#)

To our Conservation Halton friends:

I hope you and your family are keeping well. I am writing to you today to ask for your support.

This year has been challenging for us all, but it has also given us an opportunity to take a step back and focus on the important things in life. If there has been any silver lining to our experience living through this pandemic, we have to say that it has been the spirit of community and renewed appreciation for nature that we have seen through the watershed over this past year.

On November 5, 2020, the provincial government tabled Bill 229 *Protect, Support, and Recover from COVID-19 Act (Budget Measures), 2020*. This piece of legislation encompasses more than just a budget in response to COVID-19 as its name might suggest. There have been several proposed **changes** to the *Conservation Authorities Act* within this Bill that we are concerned about. It is not a well-thought-out piece of legislation. We are hoping you can use your voice to support us in

expressing these concerns to the Province. **Since the Province has picked a fast-track process to pass this Bill, timing is of the essence. We need our allies, customers, and supporters to act today by emailing the Premier and your local MPP and by getting loud on social media.**

Our concerns with proposed CA Act amendments:

1) Ability for Developers to bypass CAs: Conservation Halton has a legislated responsibility to ensure development does not occur in flood hazard areas and that our creeks, valleys and wetlands are not adversely impacted. We work hard to ensure new development is balanced and that our communities are safe and livable, with ample greenspace. The amendments proposed by the Provincial government outline a process whereby developers and others can go around Conservation Authorities to have permits approved by the Province directly.

2) Ability of CH to continue to offer Parks: We are proud to provide opportunities in recreation and education on our conservation lands to members of our community—especially during the pandemic when the need for safe and accessible greenspace is at an all-time high—and we are even more proud that we are able to fund these opportunities 100% self-sufficiently. Our responsible monetization of assets and generation of revenue creates value for the community as well as employment opportunities. At the same time, we have expanded access to our parks by 35% this season, giving Ontario families a safe place to visit during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are concerned that should the Ministry set fees or other limits on non-mandatory programs and services—particularly those that we already successfully run without the support of tax dollars—our ability to provide important recreational, educational, and employment opportunities that allow our community to interact with conservation will be significantly diminished.

3) Ability for CH to remain above politics and special interests: The proposed changes to the composition of CA boards negatively disrupts what is currently a relatively apolitical structure. Our Board of Directors carry out their fiduciary responsibilities, guide strategy, approve policies in support of our Provincial and municipal responsibilities and track performance. They ensure CH makes decisions

with integrity, based solely on our core responsibilities and remains apolitical, yet innovative and solution oriented. It is our view that changing the composition to reflect elected officials that represent the interests of their respective municipalities creates a setting ripe for conflict of interest.

4) Ability to monitor, restore and grow our natural areas: Conservation Halton's mission is to help protect the natural environment, from lake to escarpment, for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Protecting and maintaining our natural heritage in turn benefits human, ecological, and economic health. We inherited our natural spaces from the generations before us and will pass them on to our children and future generations. Our duty as stewards is what continues to inspire us to use science to study and inform us about climate change impacts to our communities and mitigation strategies. Should the new amendments pass, our ability to make independent science-based decisions in the interest of the community will be significantly limited, our wetlands, valleys, and water will be at risk, and our ability to remedy violations that put our environment and communities in danger will be minimal.

How You Can Help

Please raise your voice with ours! We've sent a [letter](#) to the Premier, members of Cabinet and our local MPPs and need you to do the same. Click the green button to send your local MPP, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, The Minister of the Environment Conservation and Parks, and the Minister of Finance a letter asking them to hold off on making unilateral changes without public consultation. Be sure to follow us on social media where we plan to keep the conversation going!

[Click here to support Conservation Halton](#)

Thank you again for your continued support of our environment and community.

Yours in conservation,

Hassaan Basit
President and CEO

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