



Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods

Community Counts. Civic Matters.

November 28, 2020

Ontario Legislature
Attention: Julia Douglas, Committee Clerk
Email: comm-financeaffairs@ola.org

RE: **Bill 229: Budget Measures - Schedule 6 - Conservation Authorities.**

Dear Chair Amarjot Sandhu, MPP and Members, Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

This is to express our opposition to Schedule 6 to the Budget Measures Bill. Schedule 6 is unrelated to the Budget and appears to be placed there in a duplicitous effort to make changes “under cover of COVID-19”. Numerous changes are proposed which would slash the role of Conservation Authorities (CAs), disabling their role in ravine protection, and enabling developers to sidestep Conservation Authorities, and go directly to the Minister for permits without CA review.

The changes challenge the basic scientific premise of water management - that watersheds are shared resources. Management for them is a responsibility that must be shared between municipalities. One of the changes is to require municipal representatives to govern based on the potentially narrow needs/wishes of a municipality. Persons who are appointed to a Conservation Authority are required to take a watershed perspective. In many cases, they are regional councillors, responsible for looking at the bigger picture. This premise is fundamental to conservation authority governance, and a major reason for the enormous success of conservation authorities in Ontario since their establishment in 1946.

Consultations have taken place in the past year regarding the Conservation Authorities but potential changes to the legislation have not been summarized and made available to the public. The Government must be as transparent in its work as they are requiring of others.

Before irretrievable damage is done, we urge the Standing Committee to recommend to the Government that they pull this legislation back. As we face so many issues resulting from the pandemic, rushing this through undermines the Government’s credibility.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoff Kettel
President

c.c. Premier, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks