



June 25, 2021

Honourable David Piccini

Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks

777 Bay Street, 5th Floor,

Toronto, ON, M7A 2J3

Minister Piccini,

First off, congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks! This will be a busy and exciting time for you, and hopefully, a rewarding one.

I am writing as Chair of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, about the review of the regulatory proposals for the CA Act. Recently, Conservation Ontario (CO) submitted a detailed response to the ERO posting. The NVCA Board of Directors endorsed CO's comments at our meeting today. Our Board also passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS: the provincial government has presented regulatory legislative amendments related to the CAA;

RESOLVED THAT: the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) board of directors accepts this report for information and review; and

FURTHER THAT: Conservation Ontario's comments on the "Regulatory Proposal (Phase 1) under the Conservation Authorities Act (ERO #019 -2986) proposed positioning in the summary table and referenced in 1, 2a, 2b and 3 be endorsed for submission to the Minister, Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks and furthermore that this letter including this resolution be submitted by NVCA Chair McLeod to the ERO portal prior to June 27, 2021.

The NVCA board agrees with the comments made by Conservation Ontario regarding the guidelines on the regulations.

During the December, 2020 debate on Bill 229 and Schedule 6, thousands of Ontarians demonstrated their support for the work of Conservation Authorities and the practice of watershed management. It's important that your ministry finds, if you'll pardon the expression, 'common ground' with CAs, so we can together focus on protecting Ontario's watersheds.

The NVCA's perspective is that we would appreciate clarity quickly so our staff can most effectively implement the substantial changes your Ministry is planning. As it is, senior staff will face very challenging time constraints and the CA will face additional costs to deliver these changes.

The Board of the NVCA and I are tremendously encouraged to see a core watershed-based resource management strategy being recommended. The NVCA recently completed an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) with a 20-year horizon for our watershed, which covers a wide swath of the area from Alliston to Wasaga Beach and includes a total of 18 municipalities. The work on the IWMP was encouraged with the participation of several hundred of our stakeholders, including AMO, MECP, MNRF, our Municipal partners, our Agricultural Advisory Committee and the public, with all the participants recognizing the value of a watershed-based approach.

As I'm sure you know, outdoor recreation has become essential as we all have coped with the pandemic, and there has been a huge increase in the number of users at our Conservation Areas. While the pandemic is ebbing, we do not expect this trend to slow. The NVCA believes recreation in conservation areas should be classified as mandatory, in order to continue to allow public access to these lands and waters.

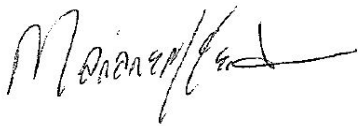
The NVCA also believes stewardship and forestry programs play a vital role in protecting people and property and should be considered mandatory. Each year, we plant in excess of 100,000 trees at the request of landowners, while our stewardship projects on private lands use green infrastructure to reduce and mitigate the risk of flooding and erosion.

Over the years, the NVCA has utilized public participation on committees that assist our board of directors. We currently have an active Agricultural Advisory Committee with public representation from Grey, Dufferin and Simcoe Counties. It is our hope the Community Advisory Boards proposed by the Province are flexible and will not duplicate the work of the Conservation Authority Boards.

The NVCA looks forward to working with you and your Ministry staff to create partnerships that allow us to achieve our mutual objectives of protecting people, property and the environment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mariane McLeod", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mariane McLeod

Councillor, Town of Collingwood; Chair, Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority