

CITY OF HAMILTON

NOTICE OF MOTION

General Issues Committee: April 15, 2026

MOVED BY MAYOR A. HORWATH.....

Opposition to Provincial Consolidation of Conservation Authorities - REVISED

WHEREAS, Conservation Authorities are locally governed, watershed-based organizations that play a critical role in flood management, erosion control, natural heritage protection, source water protection, and climate resilience;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton is currently served by multiple Conservation Authorities, including Conservation Halton, Hamilton Conservation Authority, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and Grand River Conservation Authority, each with jurisdiction over different watershed areas that collectively reflect Hamilton's diverse geography;

WHEREAS, these Conservation Authorities provide significant benefits to Hamilton residents, including stewardship of conservation lands, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, management of flood and erosion risks, watershed planning, environmental monitoring, and public education;

WHEREAS, these organizations bring decades of local expertise and scientific knowledge related to Hamilton's unique natural features, including the Niagara Escarpment, Lake Ontario shoreline, urban and rural watersheds, agricultural lands, and provincially significant wetlands;

WHEREAS, Conservation Authorities are key partners in municipal planning and infrastructure decisions, providing technical review and guidance to ensure development occurs safely and responsibly, reducing long-term risks to residents, property, and municipal infrastructure;

WHEREAS, the Province of Ontario has enacted Bill 68, the Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025, which amends the Conservation Authorities Act, establishes the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, and enables the consolidation and transition to a regional watershed-based framework for Conservation Authorities in Ontario;

WHEREAS, the consolidation of Conservation Authorities risks reducing locally informed decision-making, weakening watershed-based management, and diminishing the ability of Conservation Authorities to respond to the specific environmental, flood management, and planning needs of Hamilton communities; and

WHEREAS, changes of this scale could disrupt long-standing partnerships, service delivery, and local governance structures, and create uncertainty, delay, and transition costs in planning and environmental review processes, without clear evidence that consolidation would improve outcomes for municipalities or residents.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That the City of Hamilton formally express its opposition to the Province of Ontario's consolidation of local Conservation Authorities as enabled through amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act under Bill 68, the Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025;
- (b) That the City of Hamilton request that the Province of Ontario reconsider the consolidation of Conservation Authorities and maintain the current watershed-based Conservation Authority model; and,
- (c) That a copy of this motion be sent to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, local Members of Provincial Parliament, and the Chairs and Chief Administrative Officers of Conservation Halton, Hamilton Conservation Authority, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and Grand River Conservation Authority.