



LOWER TRENT
CONSERVATION

MEDIA RELEASE

Healthy Watersheds for Healthy Communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Proposed Changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* Affect the Safety of Watershed Residents

Lower Trent Conservation's role in protecting and managing the local environment is being threatened by proposed changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and *Planning Act*. Conservation Authorities (CAs) play a critical part in watershed planning and management, and yet the province's changes could severely reduce that role.

"We have a duty to make certain that our communities are safe from natural hazards, while doing our best to mitigate climate change. We need to have a transparent process to ensure we keep our watershed properly managed," explains Lower Trent Conservation CAO Rhonda Bateman.

Within the Province's latest budget bill (bill 229), issued November 5, were a number of changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the *Planning Act* were made that will limit conservation authorities' role in protecting Ontario's environment and ensuring people and property are safe from natural hazards. Some of the key outcomes and changes are:

- Removing and/or significantly hindering the conservation authorities' role in regulating development, permit and planning application appeal process and engaging in review and appeal of municipal planning applications.
- Allowing the Minister to make decisions on permit appeals and issue permits without watershed data, knowledge, and expertise from the conservation authorities.
- Redirecting the fiduciary role (Duty of Members) for municipally appointed CA Board members. Decisions are to be made in the best interest of each municipality and not the conservation authority which is contrary to corporate governance models.

"Lower Trent Conservation, alongside conservation authorities across the province, are asking the provincial government to **remove Schedule 6 from the Bill 229**, so that these significant changes can be properly discussed and informed through consultation", says Rhonda Bateman, "the time to act is now, we are encouraging watershed residents to reach out to their local MPPs and request they review and address the concerns presented by this Bill before enacting it."

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"Working with Local Communities to Protect our Natural Environment"



Member of Conservation Ontario
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