



City of Stratford, Corporate Services Department

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January 15, 2026

Sent by email: doug.fordco@pc.ola.org

The Honourable Doug Ford

Premier of Ontario

Legislative Building, Queen's Park

Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Honourable Doug Ford,

Re: Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act, and ERO Posting 025-1257

At the January 12, 2026, Regular meeting, Stratford City Council considered resolutions from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and the Long Point Region Conservation Authority regarding Bill 68 and ERO Posting 025-1257 relating to the proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities.

At the meeting, Stratford City Council adopted the following resolution:

R2026-21

THAT CA-2026-007, being resolutions regarding Bill 68: Plan to Protect Ontario Act, be endorsed.

A copy of the endorsed resolution has been provided below:

WHEREAS the Conservation Authorities Act (1946) enables municipalities to establish local conservation authorities, and when municipalities choose to form such authorities, they assume responsibility for governance and funding through the appointment of a Board of Directors and the provision of an annual levy to cover expenses;

AND WHEREAS the City of Stratford established the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (initially formed in 1947);

AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide approximately 35% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 2% (2026 budget);

AND WHEREAS municipalities have governed their respective conservation authorities for decades, tailoring programs and services to local watershed needs, maintaining accountable service standards, and ensuring fair and predictable costs for ratepayers;

AND WHEREAS conservation authorities collectively own and manage thousands of acres of land. Many of these properties were entrusted to the UTRCA for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good, with the expectation that such lands would be cared for by locally governed conservation authorities;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, a Crown corporation that would assume governance responsibilities and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities, with municipal cost apportionment yet to be defined;

AND WHEREAS the Province already possesses the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations, and standards through the Conservation Authorities Act and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands;

AND FURTHER THAT while the City of Stratford supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down agency structure without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs;

AND FURTHER THAT the City of Stratford supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity, and program delivery across the province, and requests that the Province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to determine the most effective level of strategic consolidation to achieve both provincial and local objectives;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to:

- the Ontario Minister of Environment, Conservation, and Parks,
- local MPPs,
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario,
- Rural Ontario Municipal Association,
- area Indigenous communities,
- all municipalities,
- Conservation Authorities, and
- Conservation Ontario.

Sincerely,

T. Dafoe

Tatiana Dafoe, Clerk
tdafoe@stratford.ca
519-271-0250 extension 5329

Cc: The Honourable Todd J. McCarthy, Minister of Environment, Conservation, and Parks,
Matthew Rae, Member of Provincial Parliament for Perth – Wellington,
Association of Municipalities of Ontario,
Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA)
All Ontario municipalities,
The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority,
Long Point Region Conservation Authority, and
Conservation Ontario.