

November 28, 2025

**Re: UTRCA Board Resolution Re: Bill 68 (Schedule 3) and ERO Posting 025-1257**

On October 31, 2025 the Ontario government announced plans to create the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA). Included in this announcement, the Province also proposed the merger of Ontario's 36 local Conservation Authorities into seven Regionally based Authorities.

Bill 68 "Plan to Protect Ontario Act" includes Schedule 3 which outlines changes to the Conservation Authorities Act to establish the OPCA. The Bill received Royal Assent on November 27<sup>th</sup> without having undergone any process to gather public input or consultation.

This Agency will be governed by an appointed board and operated by a staff whose task will be to receive Provincial direction and exercise that direction over the leadership, governance and strategic direction to Conservation Authorities.

Instead of being directed by locally elected and appointed representatives in the format that we are currently accustomed to; this action will see your local CA become part of a larger regional Authority that will in turn be directed by a Provincial Agency.

In addition, the Province is currently consulting on a proposal to consolidate 36 Conservation Authorities into 7 Regional CAs. The "[Proposed Boundaries for Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities](#)" (ERO #025-1257) is open for public consultation until December 22, 2025.

Under this proposal Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) would be consolidated into the Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority together with seven other CAs and encompass 81 municipalities. The new governance structure is proposed to be effective following the municipal elections in 2026.

At their November 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, the UTRCA's Board of Directors examined the formation of the OPCA and regional Cas. The Board directed staff to prepare information to highlight the potential economic and legal ramifications of this proposal and to circulate this brief to our member municipalities and Indigenous communities. See the attached information package which highlights the impacts of the Provincial proposal.

The UTRCA Board of Directors urgently encourages our member municipalities and partners to carefully evaluate the Provincial proposal and their response at the earliest opportunity. An example motion is provided. The CA network was built on local resources, local knowledge and local decisions. An example motion is provided.

In conclusion, the current Conservation Authority network was built on the concept of making local watershed management decisions by using local resources, local knowledge and local expertise.

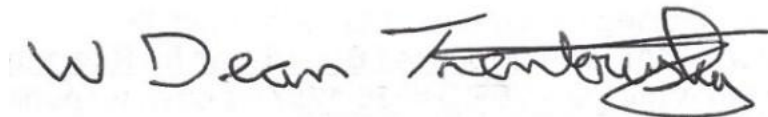
This also includes the financial resources and the physical infrastructure that has been built up and maintained by the local watershed municipalities over several decades. Therefore, it's essential and vitally important for our local member municipalities that this decision-making and management process remain in the capable hands of the locally elected and locally appointed representatives who remain directly accountable to the communities that they serve.

Both our watershed member municipalities and the public are strongly encouraged to provide comments through the posting entitled "[Proposed Boundaries for Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities](#)" (ERO #025-1257), well in advance of the closing date December 22, 2025.

Similarly, all of our watershed member municipalities and the public are strongly encouraged to communicate their comments and concerns to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, and to their local MPP.

Thank you for your attention and for your continued co-operation regarding this extremely important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W Dean Trentowsky". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "W".

W. Dean Trentowsky  
Chair, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

Attached: Example Municipal Resolution  
Municipal Communications – Proposed Conservation Authorities Transformation