

**Ministry of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks**

Conservation and Source Protection
Branch

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**Ministère de l'Environnement, de la
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Good afternoon:

As part of Ontario's efforts to implement amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* made in 2019/2020 to ensure that conservation authorities focus and deliver on their mandates of protecting people and property from flooding and other natural hazards, and conserving natural resources, three (3) new regulations have been made under the *Conservation Authorities Act*:

- Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services. This regulation prescribes the mandatory programs and services conservation authorities would be required to provide, including core watershed-based resource management strategies.
- Ontario Regulation 687/21: Transition Plans and Agreements for Programs and Services Under Section 21.1.2 of the Act. This regulation requires each authority to have a 'transition plan' that would outline the steps to be taken to develop an inventory of programs and services and to enter into agreements with participating municipalities to fund non-mandatory programs and services through a municipal levy, among other things. It also establishes the transition period to enter into those agreements.
- Ontario Regulation 688/21: Rules of Conduct in Conservation Areas. This regulation consolidates the current individual conservation authority 'Conservation Area' regulations made under Section 29 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* into one Minister's regulation that regulates the public use of authority owned land.

The new regulations will focus conservation authorities on their core mandate by prescribing mandatory programs and services they must provide, giving municipalities greater control over which conservation authority non-mandatory programs and services they will fund, and will consolidate "conservation areas" regulations. A decision notice is available on the Environmental Registry of Ontario ([notice number 019-2986](#)).

The regulations reflect extensive comments received on the regulatory proposals posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario for 45 days from May 13, 2021 until June 27, 2021. We received 444 submissions from municipalities, conservation authorities, Indigenous communities and organizations, environmental non-government organizations, community groups, industry, agricultural sector, and individuals. We also held 3 webinars with ministry staff in which over 500 people attended. All the feedback

received during the consultation period was considered, and the final regulations were modified based on this feedback as follows:

- We extended the timeline that conservation authorities must complete the transition to the new funding framework to January 1, 2024.
- We clarified the requirements for municipal involvement in the preparation of the inventory of programs and services.
- We added the requirement for conservation authorities to provide costing information (e.g. total costs for the last 5 years) to deliver all mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services.
- We included low-maintenance passive recreation like trails, day use parks and picnicking areas in the list of mandatory programs and services.
- We provided an extended timeline for specific deliverables (i.e. core watershed-based resource management strategy) under the mandatory programs and services regulation (i.e. to be completed on or before December 31, 2024).
- We removed the requirement for conservation authorities to have community advisory boards (they will continue to be optional for conservation authorities). For clarity, conservation authorities will still have the opportunity for an agriculture representative to be appointed by the Minister.

These regulations will improve conservation and land management efforts, strengthen Ontario's resilience to climate change, ensure continued access to safe drinking water, protect people and property from extreme weather events like flooding, drought, and erosion, and most importantly protect the environment.

Thank you again for your input. You can reach the ministry at ca.office@ontario.ca if you have any questions. The Ministry will also be organizing webinars to answer technical questions in October. I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure conservation authorities are in the best position to deliver on their core mandate.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Corrigan
Director, Conservation and Source Protection Branch