

April 2, 2026

Dear CAO Clohecy,

I am pleased to provide an update and clarity on the recent changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CA Act) introduced through *Bill 97, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2026* (Schedule 3 Conservation Authorities Act includes amendments to the CA Act).

Under this legislation, Conservation Halton, Credit Valley, Hamilton, and Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authorities will merge to form the Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority (WLOORCA). A transition committee will be established within 90 days of approval, including representatives of the predecessor CA and a Project Executive appointed by the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA). A transition plan will be approved by the OPCA, and a copy will be provided to the participating municipalities. A transition date of February 1, 2027, is proposed.

All ongoing planning matters and services (including services offered to municipalities under Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)) will continue under the new Authority without disruption. The new Authority will assume the rights, obligations, assets and liabilities of the predecessor Authority. Additional details related to governance, watershed councils, and other matters will be finalized through future regulations.

### **Governance**

Participating municipalities are all single- and upper-tier municipalities within the jurisdiction of the new Authority. New Regulations are proposed upon Royal Assent of Bill 97 Schedule 3, including:

- Prescribing a transition date (February 1, 2027, or later)
- Prescribing Board member details appointed to an Authority by the participating municipality
- Criteria for the appointment of a citizen member who is not a member of the council
- Watershed Councils

The formal transfer and consolidation to WLOORCA is scheduled for February 2027 (or updated per new regulations), post municipal elections, and once the new CA Board members have been appointed by the upper-tier and single-tier participating municipalities. Participating municipalities appointing members will need to notify OPCA of the appointments in writing.

## **2027 Budget Process**

No changes are proposed to the 2027 budget process or the Budget Regulation at this time. The Province has asked that all budgets be submitted to municipalities before December 2026. The Minister may issue directions on CA budgetary matters in future.

## **Plan Review Services**

It is business as usual for our plan review services. Accordingly, planning applications should continue to be circulated to Conservation Halton for review. Plan review comments under the Mandatory Programs and Services Regulation (O.R. 686/21), including natural hazards and source water protection, will be unchanged.

We will continue to provide our usual plan review services in a timely manner to support your ability to meet the legislated deadlines under the *Planning Act*.

## **Permits**

It is business as usual for Conservation Halton's permitting services, with the exception of the provisions for Minister's Zoning Orders and Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator Orders (CA Act, s. 28.0.1) under Sections 34.1 and 47 of the *Planning Act*. We will collaborate with you on the efficient delivery of such permits as they arise.

## **Updated Fee Schedule**

Conservation Halton's fee schedule for 2026 was approved by the Conservation Halton Board on February 12, 2026, and is available on our website ([conservationhalton.ca/permitting/](https://conservationhalton.ca/permitting/)). The fee schedule meets the requirements of the Minister's List of classes of programs and services for which conservation authorities may charge a fee.

## **Other Services Provided through MOUs/Agreements**

The recent legislative changes do not affect other services provided to municipalities. Conservation Halton will continue to work under arrangements through the signed MOUs and agreements.

We value the strong relationship, collaboration, and support of our municipal partners. We will ensure that you receive timely updates through Conservation Halton as we advance through this process over the next six months. In the meantime, should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me directly or my office (Adriana Birza, Senior Advisor, [abirza@hrca.on.ca](mailto:abirza@hrca.on.ca)).

Sincerely,



Chandra Sharma  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Conservation Halton