

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

**Ministère de l'Environnement,
de la Protection de la nature et des
Parcs**

Office of the Minister

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357-2020-827

June 5, 2020

Ms. Caroline Schultz
Executive Director, Ontario Nature
Email: Carolines@ontarionature.org

Mr. Tim Gray
Executive Director, Environmental Defence
Email: tgray@environmentaldefence.ca

Ms. Theresa McClenaghan
Executive Director, Canadian Environmental Law Association
Email: theresa@cela.ca

Dear Ms. Schultz, Mr. Gray and Ms. McClenaghan:

Thank you for sending me your letter to Premier Ford expressing support for Ontario's conservation authorities (CAs).

CAs play an important role in protecting the people of Ontario, including the spaces in which they work and live. Last year our government passed the *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019*, which clarifies the core mandate of CAs. The legislative changes that were made will ensure CAs focus on delivering core services and programs to protect against natural hazards, managing CA lands and drinking water source protection, while using taxpayer dollars efficiently and effectively.

These changes would not restrict the ability of CAs to provide other programs and services, including those noted in your letter, if these are items of local interest or concern that municipalities and CAs want to explore together. Municipal councils are elected by the people to provide what is best for their community, which is why the province is giving municipalities greater control and the ability to enter into agreement with CAs to fund non-mandatory programs and services, if they choose.

The government is currently reviewing all relevant legislation and has carried out consultation with CAs as well as environmental organizations, municipalities and various other stakeholders over the past fall and winter. The consultation process has yielded well thought-out feedback that will help to inform our path moving forward. We want to continue to hear from all stakeholders interested in the stewardship of our lands before we move forward with further changes to the legislation and regulations.

We remain committed to improving governance, oversight and accountability of CAs while respecting taxpayer dollars.

...2

Ms. Caroline Schultz, Mr. Tim Gray, Ms. Theresa McClenaghan
Page 2.

Thank you for bringing your comments and concerns to my attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Yurek". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Jeff" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Yurek".

Jeff Yurek
Minister of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks

c: The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
The Honourable John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry