

**From:** [ca.office \(MECP\)](#)  
**Cc:** [ca.office \(MECP\)](#)  
**Subject:** Decision Notice on the Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 3:27:07 PM

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Dear Municipal Partners and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO),

We are writing to inform you that a decision notice has been posted to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) regarding the proposal notice posting #025-1257 on the "Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities."

The proposal initially consulted on by the government proposed boundaries that would have resulted in seven regional conservation authorities. As a result of the feedback received during consultation, the province adjusted the boundaries to accommodate areas with distinct geographies and development contexts, to better balance differing priorities across rural, urban and northern areas and improve alignment with watersheds and with source protection regions. The government is now planning to move forward with consolidation to create nine optimized regional CAs. A map showing the planned boundaries and the nine new CAs is available at [Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency | ontario.ca](#).

In the coming weeks, the government plans to introduce amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act (CAA) that would implement the consolidation and set out a smooth path to consolidation to ensure service continuity for communities. Consolidation is targeted to take effect in early 2027 to allow transition planning to occur over the next year. The government's plan would ensure a clear, coordinated and successful transition led by the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA), that would minimize disruptions to CA staffing, services, permitting processes and with all existing partnerships and obligations carried forward to maintain service stability. A summary of the consolidation plan, and details on transition, are included in the decision notice [Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities | Environmental Registry of Ontario](#).

The government's plans to consolidate CAs build on recent progress Ontario has made to improve the CA system, including establishing OPCA to provide centralized leadership and oversight for Ontario's CAs. Under these plans, the important work that conservation authorities do to protect people and property from the risks of flooding and other natural hazards would not change. The nine new regional CAs would continue to operate as independent, municipally governed organizations and to fulfill their provincially mandated programs such as managing flooding and other natural hazards, drinking water source protection under the Clean Water Act, watershed management programs, and the management of their lands and recreational trails, ensuring public access to local natural areas and outdoor activities.

We recognize the important role that municipalities have in the governance of conservation authorities. We are committed to keeping you informed throughout the transition and ensuring that the relationships, programs and services that CAs provide to municipalities continue.

The province is committed to working closely with municipal partners and AMO throughout this process and ensuring local knowledge informs next steps. In the coming weeks you will be invited to technical briefings to provide further information on the next steps in the planned transition process.

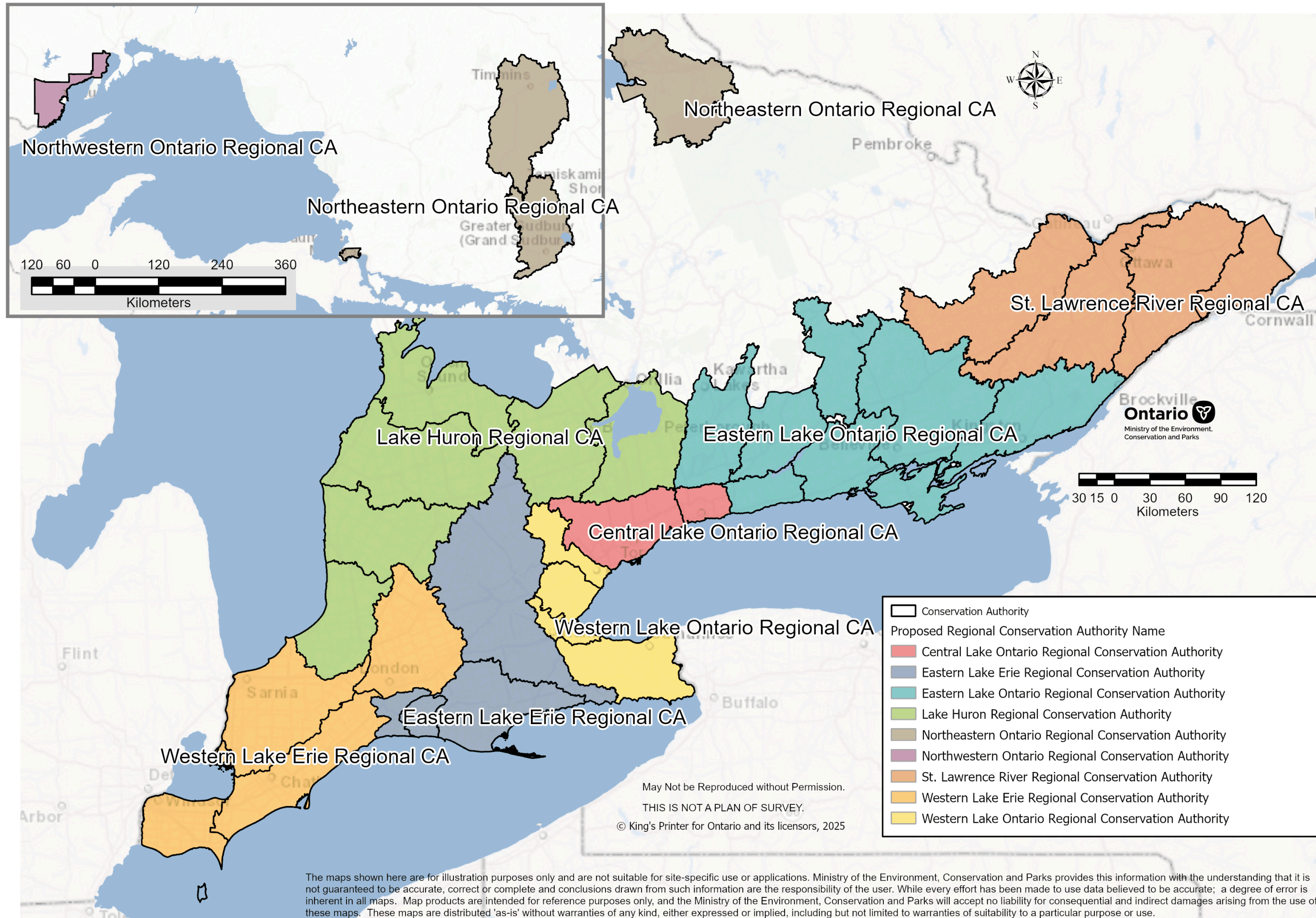
For questions regarding the plans for consolidation, please contact [CCEO@ontario.ca](mailto:CCEO@ontario.ca). If you have questions about the planned legislative amendments and day-to-day CA business, please reach out to MECP staff via [ca.office@ontario.ca](mailto:ca.office@ontario.ca).

We thank you for taking the time to share with us your perspectives during the consultations that helped to shape this plan and look forward to working closely with you and your municipal/association colleagues over the next year.

Sincerely,

Chloe Stuart  
ADM, Land and Water Division  
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Hassaan Basit  
Chief Conservation Executive  
Office of the Chief Conservation Executive



**From:** [Ontario News](#)  
**To:** [Clerks](#)  
**Subject:** Ontario Taking Next Steps to Improve Conservation Authorities  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 10:34:25 AM

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## NEWS RELEASE

# Ontario Taking Next Steps to Improve Conservation Authorities

Province consolidating 36 CAs into nine to deliver more consistent services, strengthen watershed management and better protect communities

**March 10, 2026**

[Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks](#)

TORONTO — The Ontario government is taking the next step to improve the province’s conservation authority system with our plan to create nine regional conservation authorities. This follows extensive consultation on how conservation authorities can help get shovels in the ground faster on homes and other local infrastructure projects, while strengthening their vital role in managing watersheds and protecting communities from floods and natural hazards.

The consolidated regional conservation authorities would reduce administrative duplication, redirect resources to front-line conservation and modernize permitting to help the province deliver on its plan to protect Ontario by cutting red tape and building an economy that is more competitive, resilient and self-reliant, to help keep workers on the job in the face of tariffs and economic uncertainty.

“Ontario’s improved approach would feature watershed-based regional conservation authorities operating under consistent provincial standards, modern tools and strengthened capacity – delivering stronger watershed

management, flood resilience and better support for housing and infrastructure growth,” said Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. “We listened and used feedback from last fall’s consultations to refine and strengthen our plan, including optimizing regional boundaries to better reflect local needs, knowledge and relationships.”

Ontario’s current system includes 36 independent conservation authorities with varying policies, processes and capacity, which has created a fragmented system with inconsistent standards and timelines. This has created uncertainty and delays for builders, landowners and farmers, and has made it more challenging for conservation authorities to carry out their role in protecting communities from floods and natural hazards. To address this, the province created the new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) last fall and began consulting with conservation authorities, municipalities and other partners on proposed boundaries for consolidating the province’s conservation authorities.

Based on the extensive feedback received, the government amended its proposed conservation authority boundaries and intends to introduce amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* in the coming weeks that, if passed, will set out a path to consolidate Ontario’s 36 conservation authorities to create nine new regional conservation authorities. Under this plan, the OPCA would coordinate a clear and successful transition targeting early 2027 for consolidation, and to deliver on its goal of improving customer service, enabling more consistent decision-making and strengthening watershed management across the province.

With centralized leadership and independent oversight of conservation authorities by the OPCA, Ontario’s plan for a regional conservation authority system will reduce administrative duplication across the system and allow conservation authorities to redirect resources to front-line services, operate with greater consistency and transparency and deliver strengthened services to municipalities and permit applicants. This would better position conservation authorities to support the building of new homes and infrastructure while continuing to protect communities from flooding and other natural hazards. Programs and services delivered by conservation authorities would remain the same, including watershed management, natural hazard management and source water protection.

To ensure local knowledge and input continue to guide watershed management, the province would require regional conservation authorities to create one or more local watershed councils that help identify local priorities for watershed-based conservation programs and services. Regional conservation authorities would remain municipally governed, with regional municipalities, counties and cities appointing members to conservation authorities. Lower-tier municipalities in counties, such as towns and townships, will no longer be participating municipalities of a conservation authority under this approach.

“Today marks a milestone for conservation in Ontario. By building a modern, more unified system, we’re protecting local expertise while supporting front-line programs that communities rely on,” said Hassaan Basit, Ontario’s Chief Conservation Executive. “The Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency would lead a smooth, well-supported transition, ensuring conservation authorities have the tools and resources they need every step of the way to deliver effective watershed management programs, meeting the needs of today and the future.”

To support regional conservation authorities throughout the transition process, the province is providing annual funding to the OPCA in the amount of \$3 million, beginning in 2026. This funding would be used by the agency to support conservation authorities as needed during the transition period. Following transition, this annual funding would go toward helping regional conservation authorities achieve program improvements.

These changes are part of the government’s plan to protect Ontario by improving the province’s fragmented and inconsistent conservation authority system to deliver more consistent services and more efficient resource and information sharing, ensuring conservation authorities are more responsive to the needs of the communities they serve.

## **Quick Facts**

- The Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency would coordinate the transition to ensure conservation authorities can continue to manage flooding and other natural hazards, drinking water source protection, permitting and the management of their lands and recreational trails.
- Conservation authorities issue permits for development activities such

as housing and the installation of supporting infrastructure in areas affected by risks of natural hazards such as floodplains, shorelines and wetlands.

- In November 2025, the government amended the *Conservation Authorities Act* to establish the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide efficient governance, strategic direction and independent oversight of Ontario's conservation authorities.
- From November 7 to December 22, 2025, the province led a 45-day consultation on the proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation, with conservation authorities, municipalities, general stakeholders, and Indigenous communities, which included six regional workshops that engaged directly with conservation authority and municipal leadership. All input received was considered and helped to inform the government's plans.

## Additional Resources

- [Improving Ontario's Conservation Authority System](#)
- [Learn more about conservation authorities](#)
- [Read about the new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency](#)
- [Read the decision notice on the proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of conservation authorities](#)

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