



**City of Kingston  
Report to Council  
Report Number 26-040**

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**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services  
**Resource Staff:** Tim Park, Director, Planning Services  
**Date of Meeting:** December 16, 2025  
**Subject:** Changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act*

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**Council Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Theme: Policies & by-laws

Goal: See above

**Executive Summary:**

On October 31, 2025, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced the government's intention to amend the *Conservation Authorities Act* to create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Authority (OPCA) and consolidate the province's existing 36 conservation authorities into seven regional conservation authorities (RCA's). On November 27, 2025, the Province passed Bill 68, the *Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025*, which amended the *Conservation Authorities Act* to formally establish the OPCA, which will oversee conservation authorities and the transition to a regional watershed-based framework. This proposed consolidation represents a transformational shift in watershed management in Ontario.

The government is currently consulting the public on the proposed boundaries and operational considerations for these new seven regional authorities through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO). Under the proposed changes, the CRCA along with 4 other conservation authorities would consolidate into the new St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority, containing all or part of the 46 municipalities currently within their jurisdiction. Implementation of the proposed regional conservation authorities is anticipated to occur after the October 26, 2026, municipal election.

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As this time, the Province has indicated there would be no changes to the provincially mandated programs and services offered by conservation authorities: drinking source protection under the *Clean Water Act*; regulating development and other activities in floodplains, shorelines, watercourses and wetlands; flood forecasting and warning; and managing their lands and recreational trails. The Province has also indicated that existing conservation authority offices would remain as field offices for the larger RCA. Existing front-line staff would remain or expand, but there are anticipated to be staff reductions in management and administration.

This report provides an overview of the changes, identifies information gaps, and potential impacts to the City. One thing to note is the province is not consulting the public on their plans to amalgamate conservation authorities but rather the boundaries for the newly proposed RCAs suggesting the consolidation will happen regardless.

**Recommendation:**

This report is for informational purposes only.

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**Authorizing Signatures:**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

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**Paige Agnew, Commissioner,  
Growth & Development Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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**Lanie Hurdle, Chief  
Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required
Jenna Morley, City Solicitor	Not required
Ian Semple, Commissioner, Transportation & Infrastructure Services	Not required

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**Options/Discussion:****Background**

On October 31, 2025, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation through Schedule 3 of Bill 68 to amend the *Conservation Authorities Act* to create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA), a provincial board-governed agency, to provide centralized leadership, governance, strategic direction, and oversight of Ontario's conservation authorities. Bill 68 received Royal Assent on November 27, 2025.

In addition, the Province also announced its intention to consolidate the province's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional conservation authorities (RCAs). The Province has noted that these proposed changes to the conservation authority system "would reduce duplicative administrative costs, free-up resources for frontline conservation, and better align conservation authorities' services with provincial priorities on housing, the economy, infrastructure and climate resilience."

The Province has indicated there would be no changes to the provincially mandated programs and services offered by conservation authorities: drinking source protection under the *Clean Water Act*; regulating development and other activities in floodplains, shorelines, watercourses and wetlands; flood forecasting and warning; and managing their lands and recreational trails. RCAs would continue to provide municipal and other watershed programs and services set out under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, such as tree planting, data collection, restoration and other integrated watershed management activities that enhance the resilience of local watersheds and educate and engage local communities. Further, existing conservation authority offices would remain as field offices for the larger RCA. Existing front-line staff would remain or expand, but there are anticipated to be reductions in management and administration.

Under the proposed changes, the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority would be amalgamated into the St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority. The current conservation authorities (CAs) that would make up the proposed St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Cataraqui Region CA
- Rideau Valley CA
- Mississippi Valley CA
- South Nation River CA
- Raisin Region CA

There are 46 municipalities that fall wholly or partially under the proposed St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority versus the current 11 municipalities under the CRCA's jurisdiction.

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### **The Conservation Authorities Act**

Conservation authorities play a central role in watershed management and protecting communities from natural hazards like flooding and erosion. The *Conservation Authorities Act* was created in 1964 with each conservation authority established by the province in a common watershed. Locally the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) was created at the request of member municipalities. Municipalities work together on local resource management, including flooding and erosion issues and appoint each conservation authority's membership.

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks administers the *Conservation Authorities Act*, its regulations and policy. The Province provides conservation authorities with:

- Policies and procedures for meeting requirements in the *Conservation Authorities Act*
- Policy direction and technical advice on natural hazard management
- Partial funding for eligible natural hazard management activities
- Partial funding for studies or repairs on existing conservation authority-owned or managed flood and erosion control infrastructure (for example, dams, dykes and retaining walls)

The *Conservation Authorities Act* also establishes areas where a permit must be obtained from a CA before development or interference within wetlands and alterations to shorelines and watercourses. Permitting administered by CAs helps ensure development does not happen in unsafe areas and that it does not worsen the impacts of flooding or erosion in surrounding areas. The majority of operational funding for CAs is provided through municipal levies.

### **The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA)**

The CRCA is a community-based environmental protection and advisory agency, created in 1964 by the Province at the request of municipalities within the Cataraqui Region's watershed. Its mandate is to work in partnership with local municipalities, provincial and federal government agencies, environmental organizations and the public to monitor and protect water, natural habitats, shorelines, and promote sustainable living.

The CRCA currently has jurisdiction over 3,800 square kilometres of land from Greater Napanee in the west to Brockville in the east. In total, there are 11 watersheds in its jurisdiction.

The CRCA delivers a wide range of services, activities and facilities which include:

- Watershed strategies and management;
- Mapping and development of natural resources information database;
- Technical assistance to landowners;
- Conservation education programs;
- Outdoor recreation facilities such as conservation areas, trails and boat ramps;
- Environmental land use planning;

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- Habitat protection;
- Reforestation;
- Flooding and erosion protection;
- Sensitive wetlands, floodplains, shorelines and valley land protection; and
- Water quality and quantity monitoring.

The CRCA is managed by 17 board members appointed by the 11 municipalities within its jurisdiction. Currently four members of Kingston City Council are on the CRCA board.

### Analysis

The Province is currently consulting the public through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) [Number 025-1257](#) on the proposed geographical jurisdiction of each RCA and seeking feedback on operational considerations. This feedback will inform the development of further proposed changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* related to the transition to regional watersheds.

As further outlined in Exhibits A and B, the proposed RCAs include:

- **Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority** – includes southwestern Ontario watersheds draining into Lake Erie, including the Thames, Grand, and Sydenham systems, supporting agriculture, industry, and shoreline communities. Primarily based on the Northern Lake Erie Secondary Watershed.
- **Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority** – includes watersheds along Lake Huron's northern shore and the Lake Superior basin, supporting conservation and flood management across vast northern watersheds. Primarily based on the Eastern Lake Huron and southern portion of Eastern Georgian Bay Secondary Watershed and in the north the central portion of Northwestern Lake Superior Secondary Watershed.
- **Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority** – extends along the western Lake Ontario shoreline from Niagara through Halton and Peel, encompassing urban and rural watersheds that support the Greater Toronto–Hamilton corridor. Primarily based on the western portion of the Northern Lake Ontario and Niagara River Secondary Watershed.
- **Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority** – covers the watersheds from north of Toronto, including parts of York Region, west through Peel Region, east through Durham, and into parts of the Kawarthas, balancing urban growth and agricultural lands while protecting key tributaries to Lake Ontario. Primarily based on the central portion of the Northern Lake Ontario and Niagara River Secondary Watershed.
- **Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority** – Includes watersheds draining to eastern Lake Ontario and the Bay of Quinte, including the Trent and Cataraqui systems, supporting a mix of agricultural, urban, and coastal communities. Primarily based on the eastern portion of the Northern Lake Ontario and Niagara River Secondary Watershed.

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- **St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority** – Encompasses watersheds flowing into the St. Lawrence River, including the Raisin and South Nation areas, coordinating flood and water management across eastern Ontario. Primarily based on the Upper St. Lawrence, Lower Ottawa River, and southern portion of the Central Ottawa River Secondary Watersheds. The City of Kingston would be located within the St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority.
- **Northeastern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority** – Brings together the conservation authorities in the northeast, maintaining coordination across large watershed areas and shared northern infrastructure and ecosystems. Its work focuses on maintaining healthy waterways, protecting natural habitats, and promoting sustainable land and water use across major watershed areas that span parts of Northern Lake Huron, the Abitibi, Missinaibi, Mattagami, Wanipitai, French, and Upper Ottawa River systems.

The criteria applied for determining the proposed boundaries for regional conservation authorities includes:

- **Maintaining watershed-based jurisdictions** – aligning with natural hydrological boundaries to support effective flood and water management, consistent with drinking water Source Protection Areas and Regions.
- **Relationships between conservation authorities and municipalities** – reducing administrative duplication and overlap for municipalities and conservation authorities to simplify accountability and strengthen local partnerships.
- **Balancing expertise and capacity across conservation authorities** – enhancing technical skills and resources across conservation authorities to improve service and program delivery.
- **Service continuity – ensuring uninterrupted delivery of local conservation authority programs** – including flood forecasting and warning, permitting, and source water protection – through and after consolidation.

Currently, no changes are proposed to the overall extent of CA jurisdiction within the province, and under consolidation, the new RCAs would remain independent organizations operating with municipal governance and oversight, in accordance with requirements under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, as administered by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

While information on how Board members would be appointed for the RCAs has not been released, significant changes are anticipated, as it will not be practical to have representation from each municipality on the Board due to the number of member municipalities.

As described earlier in this report, the core services offered by conservation authorities are not proposed to change.

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The OPCA will coordinate the transition process with conservation authority, municipal and stakeholder involvement to ensure minimal disruptions for conservation authority staff, stakeholders, member municipalities, and partners including Indigenous communities. The Ministry will provide further details on timelines, engagement opportunities, and transition supports at a future date.

### **What does this mean for Kingston and the CRCA?**

The consolidation of the 36 existing conservation authorities into seven regional bodies, managed by a newly created provincial agency (OPCA) represents a dramatic shift of watershed governance in Ontario. The government is framing this as a move toward 'efficiency, consistency, and support for housing and infrastructure development', all of which the City is in support of. However, there are also potential risks in eroding local authority, weakening watershed-specific expertise, financial considerations and undermining environmental protections in local communities as discussed below.

- **Governance and local representation**

Currently, the City has a strong representation on the CRCA board. However, under this new system it is unclear if the City would have a seat on the new RCA board. This is a risk for the community in that local representation ensures the local needs and challenges are reflected in programs and policy. As the Province has not released draft legislation for the consolidation of the CAs, it remains unclear how the Board of Directors for the proposed St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority would be selected (the current methodology would result in a Board of over 70 municipal representatives) or what the municipal funding requirements would be.

- **Responsiveness**

Currently, the CRCA serves a smaller watershed area and operates from an office within the municipality. There is a risk that with 46 municipalities falling under one larger RCA regulated by a new provincial agency, the future structure will not be as nimble and responsive to local issues, development approvals, or conservation area management.

- **Standardization of approvals**

The government has noted that the existing conservation system is fragmented with differing policies, standards, fees and technical capabilities. Under a centralized framework there is opportunity for development approvals to be more standardized and predictable for those seeking permits, etc. A standardized approach may not take into consideration more localized watershed conditions and may represent a change in practice and process than what the City has become familiar with.

- **Funding and the City's municipal levy**

The CRCA is largely funded by municipal levies from the communities it serves. With the St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority covering 46 municipalities, including the City of Ottawa, it is unclear how the levies would be accounted for, what the budget structure will be and how the services would be funded by the related municipalities.

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The consolidation of the CRCA into a new RCA offers a chance for efficiencies, standardization, and potentially faster, more predictable permitting, which can support local housing, and growth in the community. However, it is too early to say if these changes will weaken local, watershed-specific knowledge, reduce municipal influence over land and water decisions, and create a more distant centralized bureaucracy that's less responsive to Kingston's environment. These impacts cannot be assessed until draft legislation is proposed by the Province, which is anticipated in Q1/Q2 of 2026. Staff will continue to provide updates to council as necessary as the legislation moves forward.

### **Public Engagement**

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) is consulting the public through the Environmental Registry of Ontario on the boundaries of the seven proposed RCAs.

Staff attended an engagement session with the municipalities and conservation authorities of the proposed St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority on December 5, 2025. The OPCA presented information about the proposed RCAs and gathered feedback to inform the drafting of legislation needed for the regional transition. The slide deck presented by the MECP is included in Exhibit A.

At its meeting held on December 3, 2025 the Board of the CRCA received and approved a staff report on Bill 68 and Proposed Conservation Authority Consolidations ([Report Number IR-096-25](#)). As noted in the report, the CRCA will be submitting comments to the province on the proposed consolidation.

### **Climate Risk Considerations**

Conservation authorities play a key role in assessing and managing climate-related risks, particularly those linked to natural hazards such as flooding and erosion. Their expertise supports climate-resilient land-use planning on a watershed basis, infrastructure design, stormwater management, and natural heritage protection.

### **Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations**

The Province has indicated that the public, municipalities, other stakeholders, and Indigenous communities will be consulted further on the details of any future legislative or regulatory changes.

### **Existing Policy/By-Law**

*Conservation Authorities Act*

Ontario Regulation 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits

City of Kingston Official Plan

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Kingston Zoning By-Law Number 2022-62

**Financial Considerations**

The 2025 budget for the CRCA was \$6.82M with \$3.24M in a municipal levy, \$3.32M authority generated, and \$264K from the provincial government. Each year the Ministry of Natural Resources provides assessment value information for each CRCA member municipality based on the previous year's growth. The levy for 2025 is \$3,237,575. Approximately 63% of the levy is paid by the City of Kingston at \$2,039,074. The remaining \$1,198,500 of levy is shared amongst the 10 other member municipalities based on their assessment values.

It's premature to tell what the financial implications will be to the levy once the CA's have been consolidated. Staff will report back to council as we have more information.

**Contacts:**

Sukriti Agarwal, Manager, Policy Planning, 613-546-4291 extension 3217

Niall Oddie, Senior Planner, Planning Services, 613-546-4291 extension 3259

**Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:**

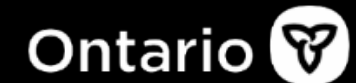
Holly Wilson, Manager of Government Relations

**Exhibits Attached:**

Exhibit A MECP – Improving Ontario's Conservation Authority System Slide Deck

Exhibit B Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities – supplemental document

# Improving Ontario's Conservation Authority System | Virtual Information Sessions



Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks | November 2025

## Purpose

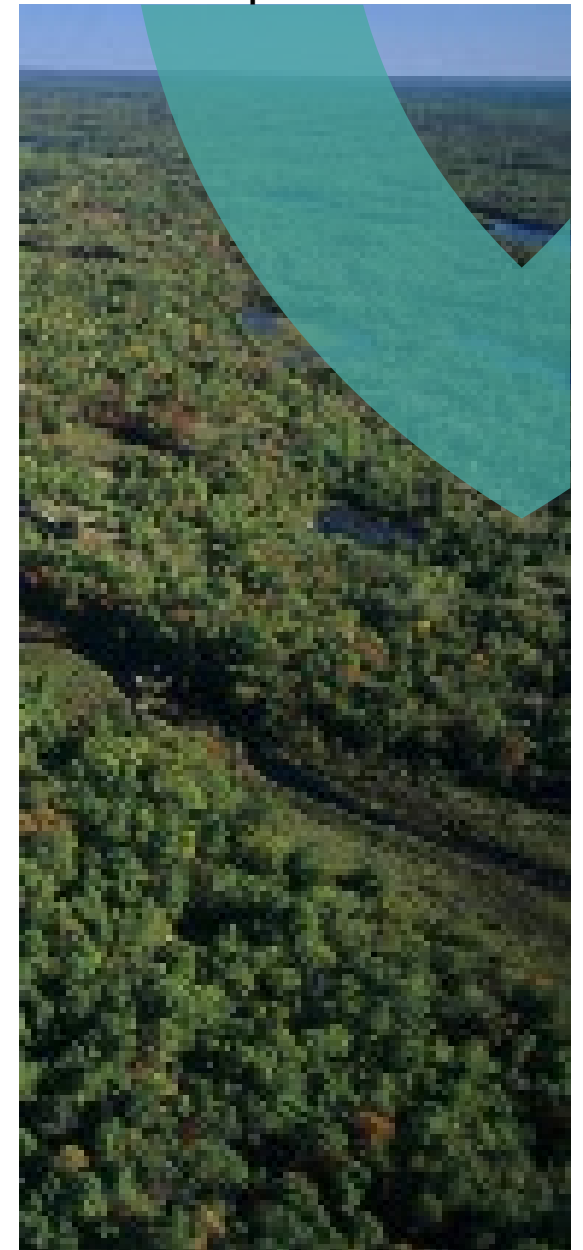
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- To provide an overview of the government's plans to improve the conservation authority system in Ontario, by:
  1. Creating the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide centralized leadership and oversight of conservation authorities
  2. Consolidating the existing 36 conservation authorities into regional conservation authorities

## Outline

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1. Introduction
2. Overview: Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency
3. Proposal: Regional consolidation of CAs and proposed boundaries
  - Consultation and Next Steps
4. Questions
  - Submit via the Q&A function on teams to be addressed following the presentation



# Introduction

# Introduction

- Conservation authorities (CAs) are created and governed by the *Conservation Authorities Act (CAA)*. MECP administers the Act and oversees Ontario's 36 CAs.
- CAs are organized based on watersheds, crossing municipal boundaries. Each CA operates independently as a local public sector directed organization, governed by a board of municipally-appointed representatives. They do their own hiring and set their own compensation levels.
- CAs play a vital role in watershed management and protecting communities from natural hazards like floods. They also deliver programs and services that further the conservation, restoration, and management of natural resources.
- CAs issue permits to builders, municipalities, and property owners for development activities such as housing developments and installation of sewage systems in areas affected by risks of natural hazards such as floodplains, shorelines, river and stream valleys, and wetlands. Permitting helps to ensure that development does not happen in unsafe areas and that it does not worsen the impacts of flooding or erosion in surrounding areas.
- In 2023 municipal funding accounted for 54%, self-generated funding for 37% and provincial funding for 5% of CA funding.

## CA's BY THE NUMBERS

**1946**  
Year the CAA  
was enacted

**36**  
CAs in Ontario

**14M+**  
People live in  
CA  
jurisdictions

**150,000**  
Hectares in  
landholdings

**3,600+**  
CA employees  
(full time, part  
time, seasonal)

**900+**  
Dams, dykes,  
channels, control  
structures

**11,000+**  
Development  
permits issued  
in 2023

**\$511M**  
Total revenue  
across CAs in  
2023

\*TRCA = \$177  
million; remaining  
35 CAs = \$334  
million.

# Improving Ontario's Conservation Authorities



**PROTECT  
ONTARIO**

The provincial government is making improvements to Ontario's Conservation Authority system by:

1. Amending the CAA to create a provincial board-governed agency, the **Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency**, to provide province-wide coordination, shared digital and technical resources, and consistent practices that strengthen — not replace — the work of regional conservation authorities.
2. Consolidating the existing 36 CAs into regional watershed based CAs. The proposed boundaries would result in **7 regional CAs**.

## Why are changes being made to Ontario's CA System?

- The *Conservation Authorities Act* was passed in 1946 and for nearly 80 years this legislation has enabled municipalities to form local watershed-based organizations to address challenges like drought, soil erosion, deforestation and flooding.
- Ontario is expected to grow by more than six million people in the next two decades and the challenges we face continue to increase in complexity from climate change, population growth and the pace of development.
- The government's plans to improve the CA system by creating an agency and regionally consolidating CAs, are not changing what conservation authorities do.
- These plans are intended to strengthen the capacity, influence, and impact of CAs in providing vital watershed management, in safeguarding people and property from flooding, and in being transparent and accountable in the delivery of permitting, programs, and services to Ontario's communities.
- With better tools and resources, and central enablement and support, CAs can operate with greater consistency and transparency, and deliver improved services to municipalities and permit applicants aligned with provincial priorities on housing, the economy, and resilient  
6 infrastructure.

## Why are changes being made to Ontario's CA System?

Key challenges the proposed changes seek to address include:

- **Patchwork of standards, service delivery:** Each CA has different policies, customer service standards, fees, processes and staffing and technical capacity leading to unpredictable and inconsistent turnaround times for approvals across all CAs. This can result in uncertainty and delays for builders, landowners, and farmers seeking permits.
- **Outdated and fragmented systems:** Discrepancies in the tools and technology that CAs use have led to varying types and quality of technology and data management. This can compromise effective provincewide flood risk management and evidence-based decision making.
- **Administrative duplication:** Under the current framework, municipalities are forced to fund duplicate corporate functions (e.g., procurement, communications), diverting costs away from front-line conservation and service delivery.
- **Need for more accountability and transparency:** Lack of transparent performance monitoring and reporting, inconsistent customer service standards.

## What's Changing/Not Changing

### What these changes mean:

- More resources for front-line services
- Improved flood management and erosion prevention
- Strong environmental protections maintained
- Faster permit approvals
- Modern service delivery
- Consistent standards and use of modern technology

### What's not changing:

- Governance model – regional CAs will continue to be independent, municipally-governed organizations. Member municipalities will continue to be represented on a board of directors for each Regional CA and will retain full governance responsibilities for Regional CAs.
- Where CAs operate – areas currently served by CAs will continue to be served by CAs
- The programs and services CAs provide, including the responsibility for source water protection, natural hazard and watershed management
- CA ownership and management of their lands and trails, providing access to green spaces, recreation and education programs
- Where and how CAs receive funding (e.g. municipal levy) including maintaining board approval of final Regional CA budgets.

# Overview: Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency

# Amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act

**To improve the province's conservation authority system, the government has proposed to create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide centralized leadership and oversight of conservation authorities.**

- Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 (No. 2) was introduced into the legislature on November 6, 2025.
- Schedule 3 of Bill 68 includes proposed amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* to establish the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (the agency), including:
  - Establishing the objects of the agency
  - Setting out the governance of the proposed agency
  - Establishing tools for agency oversight of conservation authorities
  - Establishing provincial oversight of the agency
  - Setting out sources of agency funding
- Bill 68 will proceed through the legislative process, and if passed, the provisions establishing the agency would come into effect upon Royal Assent.

# Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency – Objects

## The proposed objects of the agency are to:

1. Oversee the governance of authorities and other aspects of authorities such as their operations, including the programs and services they provide, to further the purposes of the Act.
2. Oversee the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for authorities in Ontario.
3. Promote consistent policies, standards and fees for programs and services provided by authorities.
4. Assess and report on the effectiveness of authorities in furthering the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources in watersheds in Ontario, including outcomes related to the implementation of their programs and services.
5. Oversee and evaluate the financial performance of authorities to ensure their long-term operational and capital financial sustainability, including the financial sustainability of their programs and services required under section 21.1.
6. Guide and evaluate the strategic planning by authorities to ensure it aligns with provincial objectives.
7. Support the development and implementation of a standardized and centralized system for processing applications for permits issued by authorities.
8. Lead the development and implementation of digital strategies and shared services to support the operations of authorities, including their programs and services.
9. Support strategic investment in programs and services provided by authorities, including leveraging funding available to Ontario and authorities.
10. Advise the Government of Ontario in respect of the programs and services authorities provide under the Act and any matters related to the objects of the agency.
11. Any other objects prescribed by regulation.

# Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency – Agency tools & funding sources

The agency would provide province-wide coordination, strategic direction, and oversight of Ontario's CAs. Delivery of local programs and services would continue to be led by CAs.

## Proposed agency tools

- 1) Information requests
- 2) Binding directions and non-binding guidelines may address topics such as:
  - Key performance indicators, key results or service delivery targets
  - Information technology
  - Procurement
  - Training of members and employees
  - Budgeting
  - Asset management plans
  - Strategic planning

## Proposed agency funding sources

- Provincial funding
- Fees for services
- Cost recovery from conservation authorities

## Ministerial oversight of agency directions to CAs:

- Agency must provide Minister with a copy of the proposed direction to a CA 45 days prior to issuing
- Within that 45 days, the Minister may require the agency to take any action in relation to the proposed direction (e.g., update, undertake additional consultation)
- Minister can set regulations on:
  - the process for the agency to set directions and/or
  - the things the agency is not allowed to set binding directions on

# Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency – Oversight

The proposed agency would be board-governed and arms-length of the province.

## Proposed board governance:

- Board-governed with 5-12 board members, with one Chair and up to two Vice Chairs, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.
- The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall, in appointing members of the board of directors, take into consideration,
  - (a) their knowledge and experience in public administration, corporate governance and finance;
  - (b) their knowledge of programs and services provided by authorities; and
  - (c) such other matters as may be prescribed by regulation
- Appointments may be made for a term up to 3 years, and a person may not serve on the board for more than 9 years in total.
- The board of directors manages performance of the CEO, and may, by by-law, establish such councils, committees and other bodies as it considers appropriate.

# Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency – Agency Oversight

**MECP will provide oversight of the agency and will also retain policy responsibility for the *Conservation Authorities Act* and associated regulations.**

## **Provincial oversight of agency includes:**

- Agency must follow requirements under the provincial Agencies and Appointments Directives including an annual letter of direction.
- Every 3 years the agency must provide a report on its effectiveness, priorities and value for money.
- Minister can issue mandatory directives to agency, request information, and initiate/require a review or audit of the agency.
- Ministerial oversight of agency directions to CAs.

# Proposal: Regional Consolidation of CAs

## Regional consolidation of CAs - Consultation

- The government is consulting on the proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of the CAs with impacted stakeholders, municipalities, CAs, and Indigenous communities.
- A policy proposal notice is posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (Posting # 025-1257) for 45 days, from November 7 until December 22, 2025, inviting review and comments on criteria applied to determine proposed regional boundaries, the proposed geographical jurisdiction of each regional CA, and discussion questions which are relevant to the planning for the future state.
- Comments on the proposal may be submitted on the ERO or by email to: [ca.office@ontario.ca](mailto:ca.office@ontario.ca).

## Regional consolidation of CAs – Criteria

The proposed boundaries are based primarily on natural watershed systems, keeping existing CAs whole wherever possible and aligning with source protection regions to maintain strong connections to local hydrology and drinking water protection.

Regional CAs boundaries criteria:

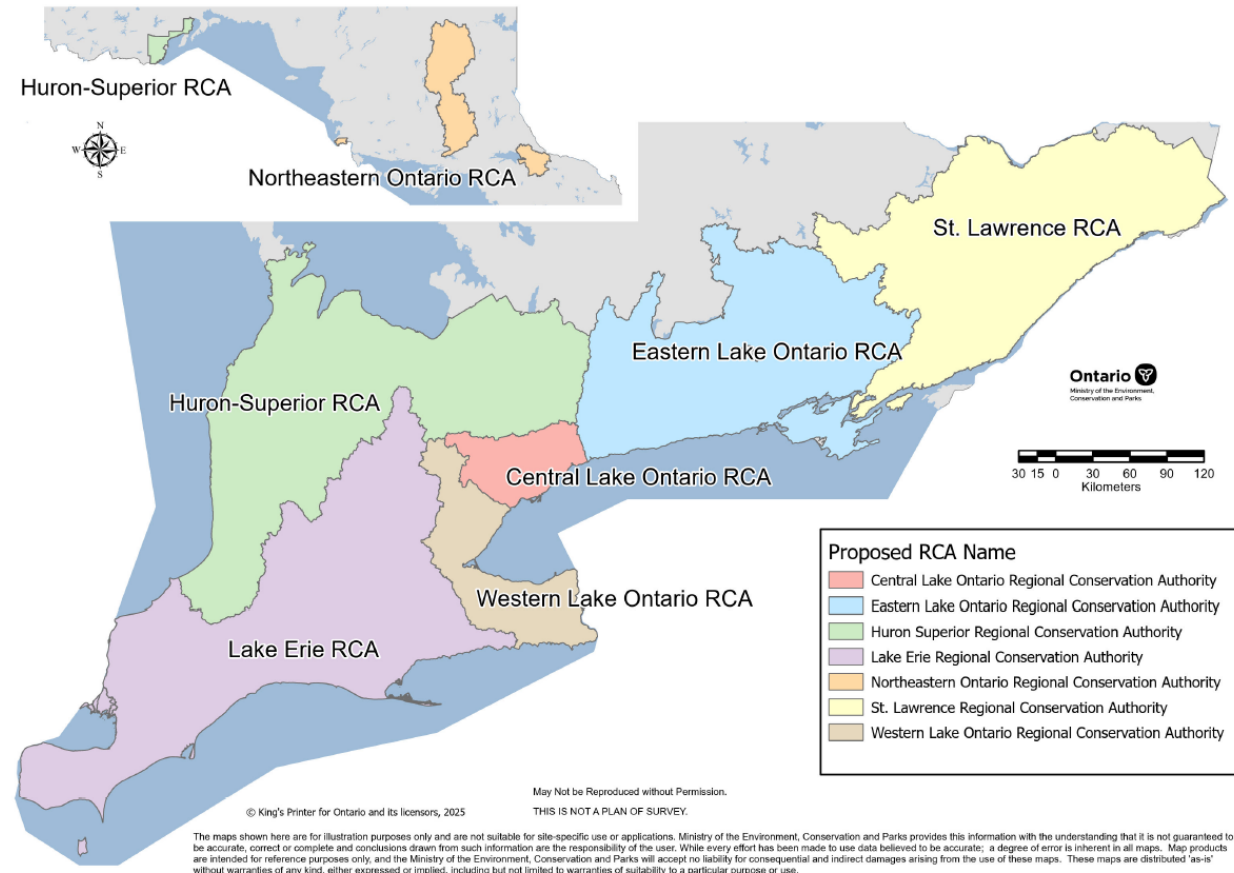
- **Maintaining watershed-based jurisdictions** - Aligning with natural hydrological boundaries to support effective flood and water management, consistent with drinking water source protection areas and regions.
- **Relationships between conservation authorities and municipalities** - Reducing administrative duplication and overlap for municipalities and conservation authorities to simplify accountability and strengthen local partnerships.
- **Balancing expertise and capacity across conservation authorities** - Enhancing technical skills and resources across conservation authorities to improve service and program delivery.
- **Service Continuity** - Ensuring uninterrupted delivery of local conservation authority programs - including flood forecasting and warning, permitting, and source water protection - through and after consolidation.

# Regional consolidation of CAs – Proposed RCAs

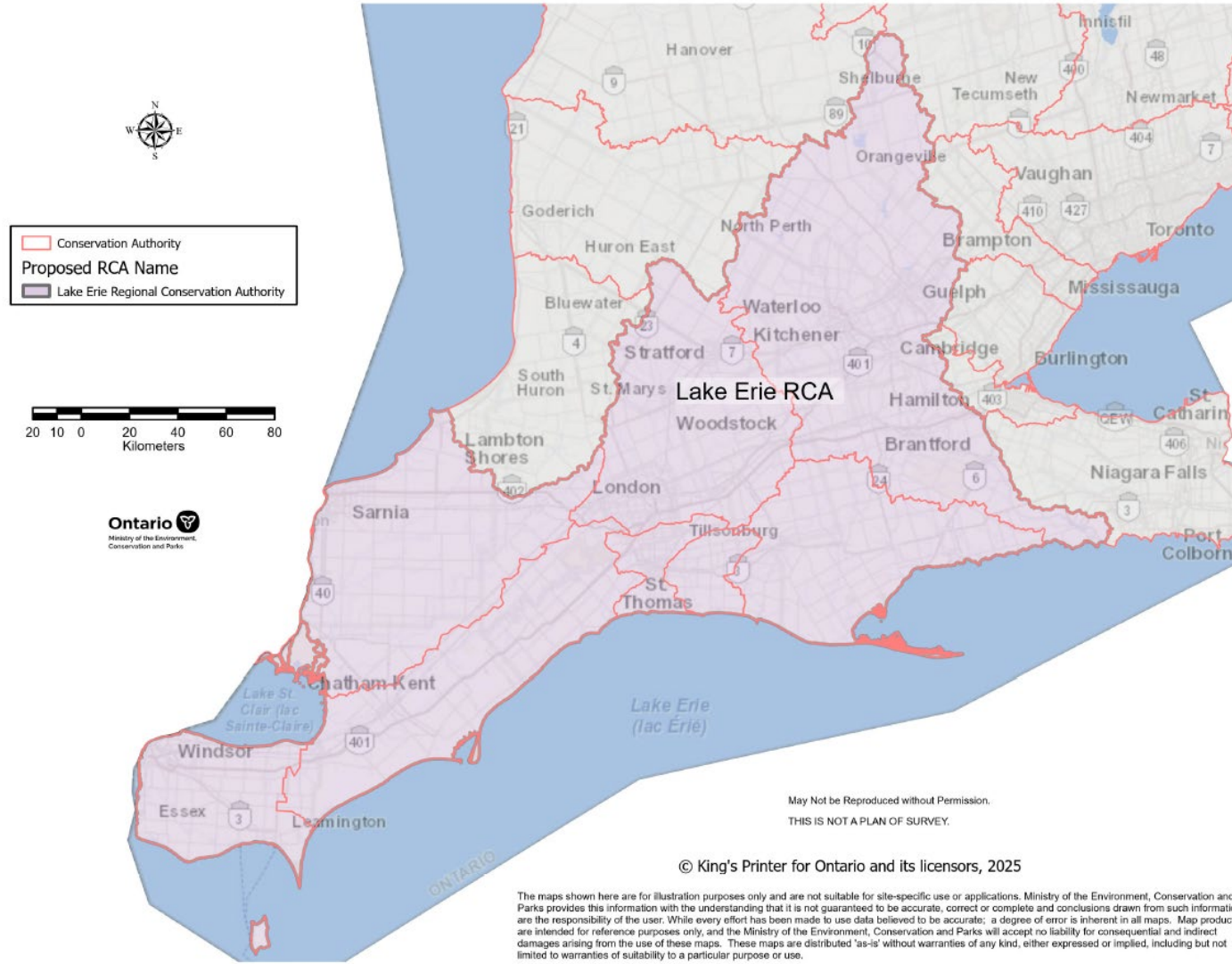
The government has proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's 36 CAs into 7 watershed-based regional CAs:

- Lake Erie Regional CA
  - Huron Superior Regional CA
  - Western Lake Ontario Regional CA
  - Central Lake Ontario Regional CA
  - Eastern Lake Ontario Regional CA
  - St. Lawrence Regional CA
  - Northeastern Ontario Regional CA
- 
- No changes would be proposed to the overall extent of CA jurisdiction

## PROPOSED 7 REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES (RCA)



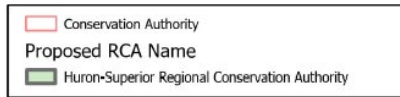
## PROPOSED LAKE ERIE REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



### Current CAs that would make up the proposed Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Essex Region CA
- Lower Thames Valley CA
- St. Clair Region CA
- Upper Thames River CA
- Kettle Creek CA
- Catfish Creek CA
- Long Point Region CA
- Grand River CA

## PROPOSED HURON-SUPERIOR REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



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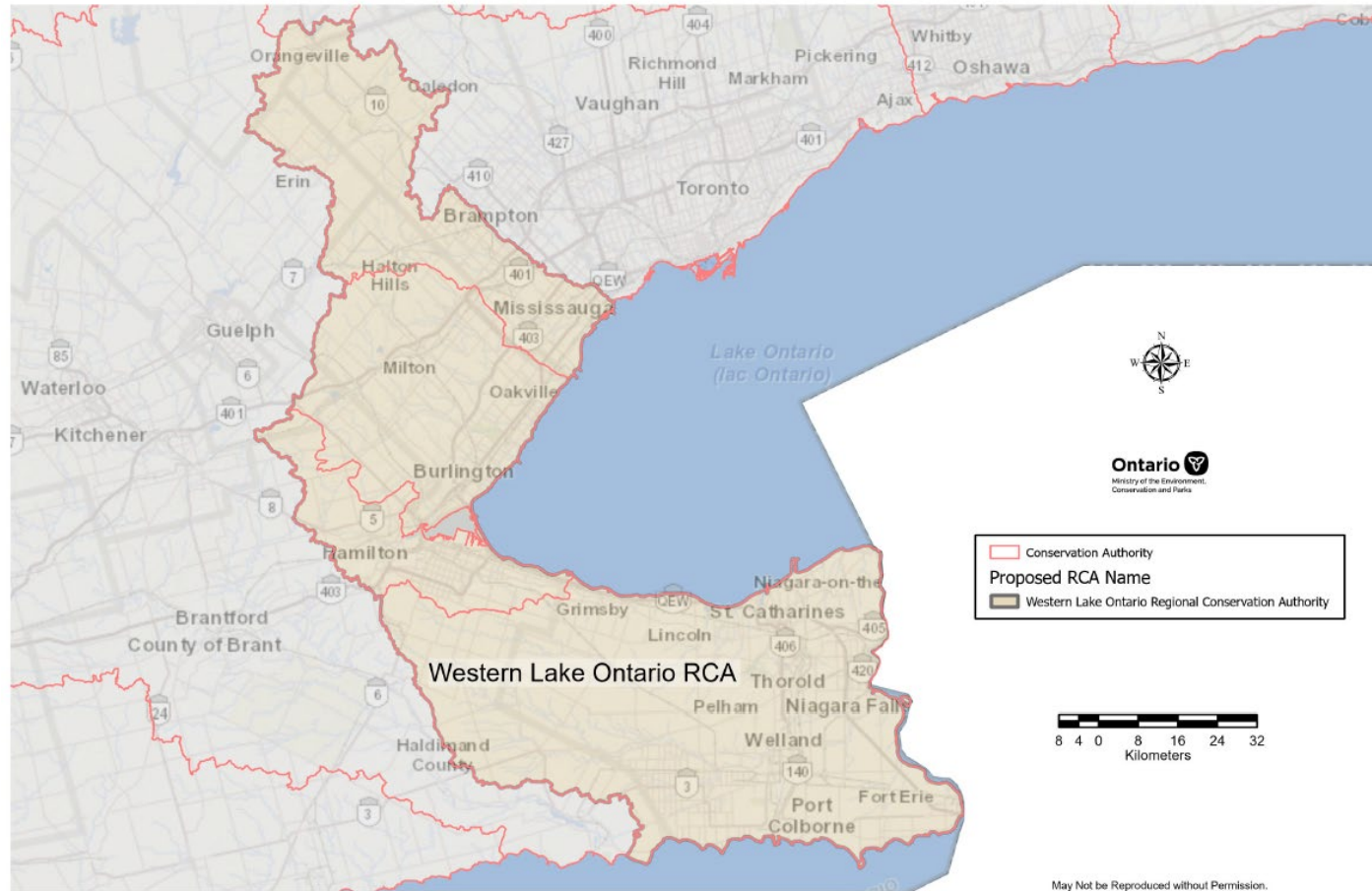
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### Current CAs that would make up the proposed Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Ausable Bayfield CA
- Maitland Valley CA
- Saugeen Valley CA
- Grey Sauble CA
- Nottawasaga Valley CA
- Lake Simcoe Region CA
- Lakehead Region CA

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## PROPOSED WESTERN LAKE ONTARIO REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



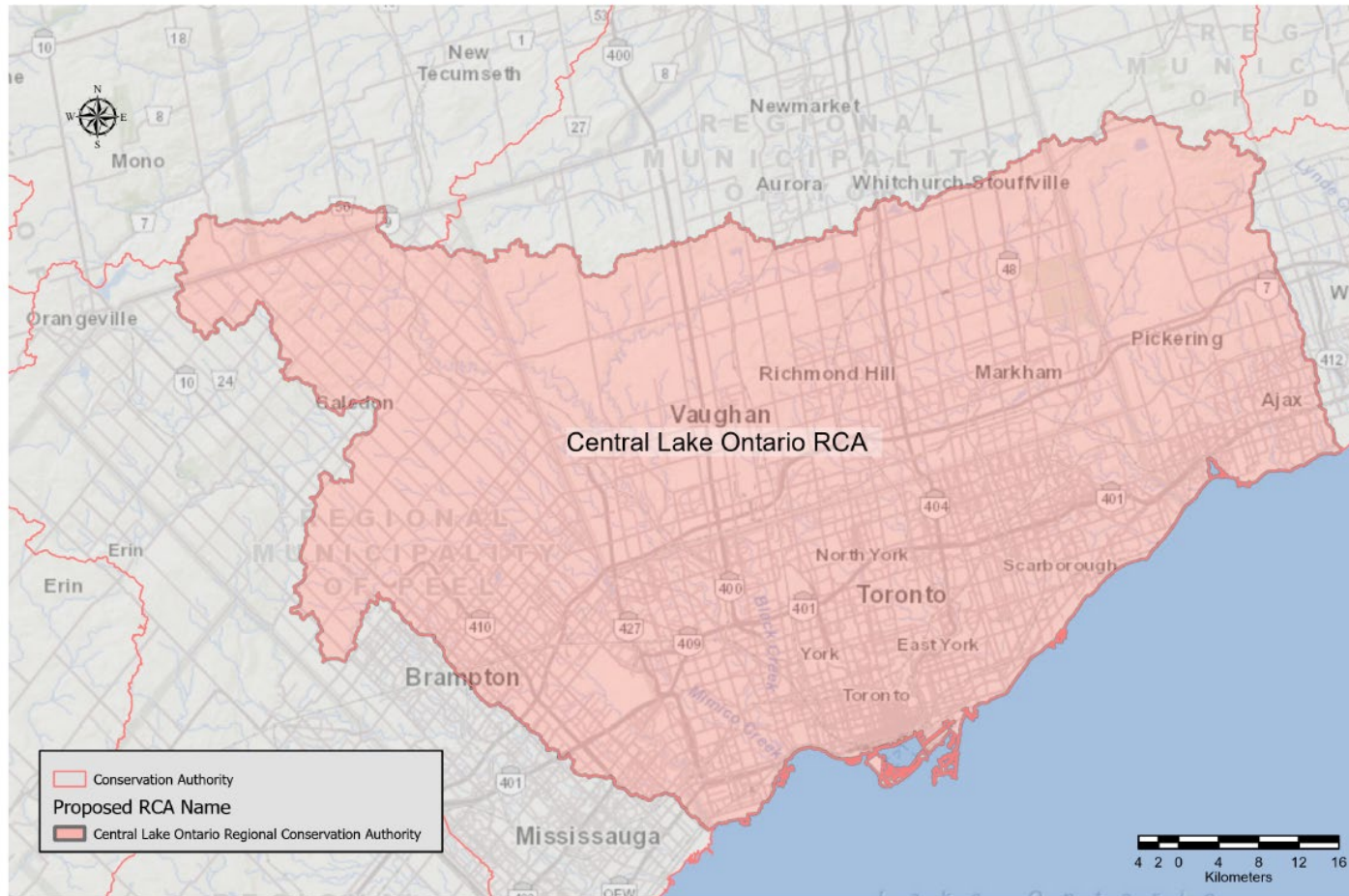
**Current CAs that would make up the proposed Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority include:**

- Niagara Peninsula CA
- Hamilton Region CA
- Halton Region CA
- Credit Valley CA

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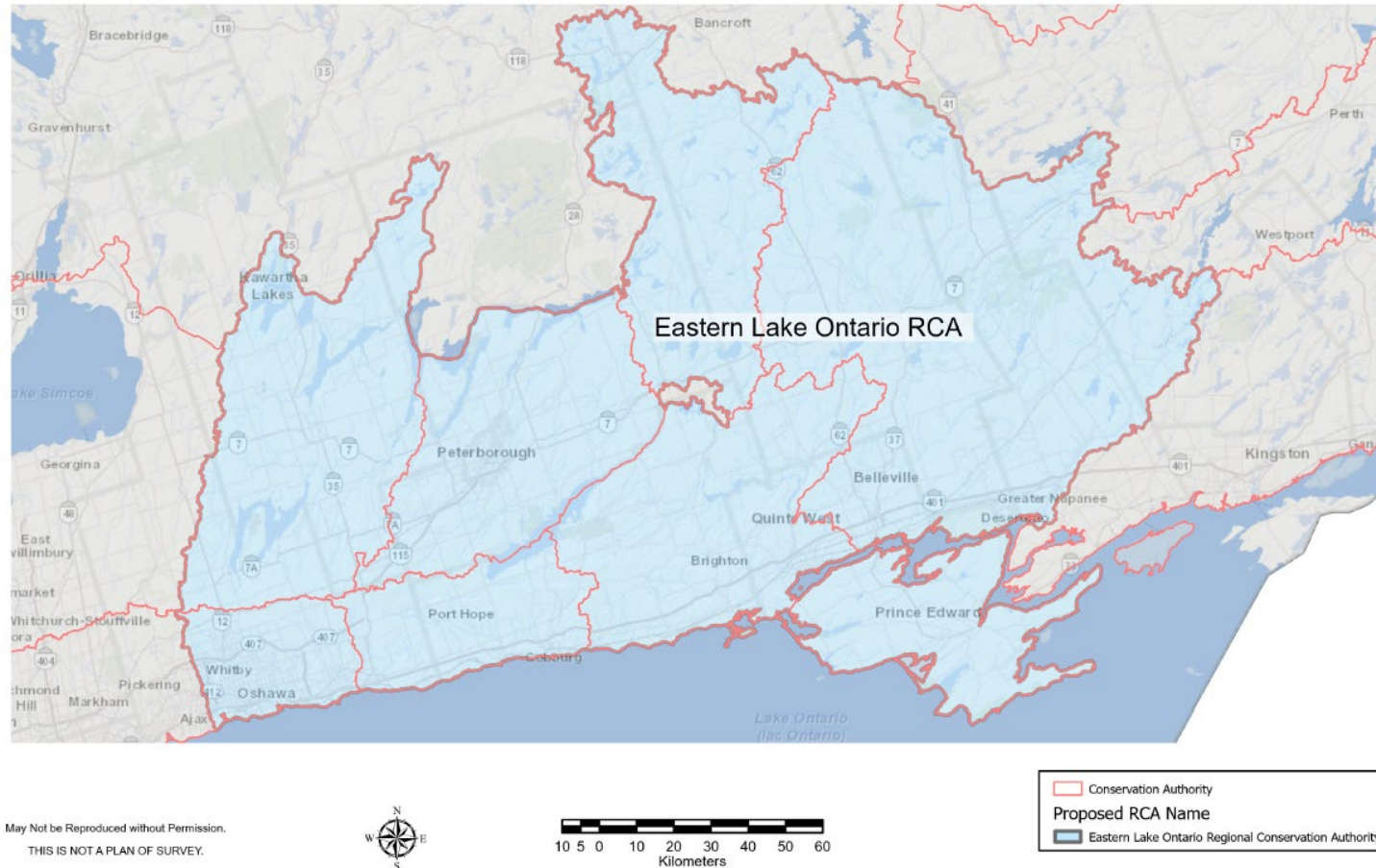
## PROPOSED CENTRAL LAKE ONTARIO REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



Current CAs that would make up the proposed Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Toronto and Region CA

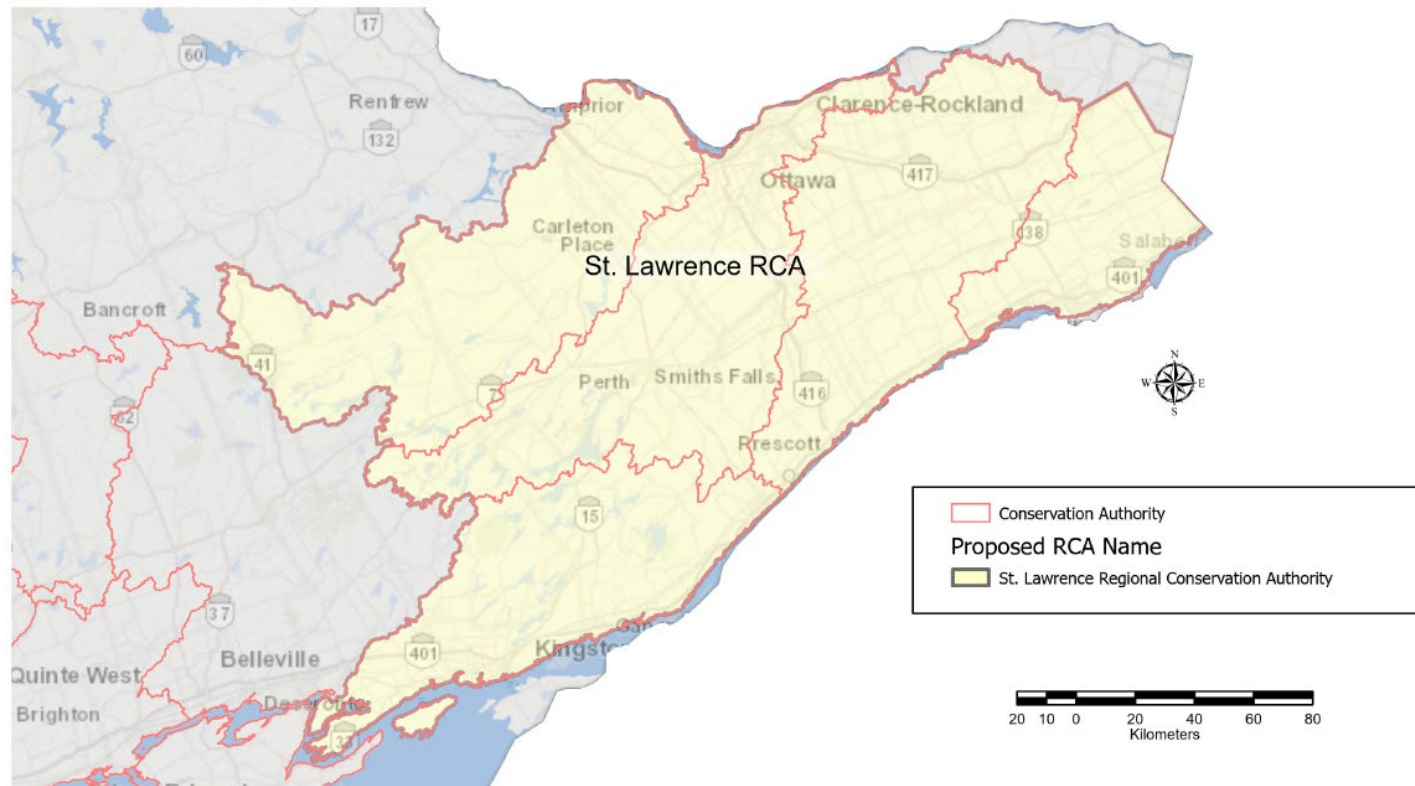
## PROPOSED EASTERN LAKE ONTARIO REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



### Current CAs that would make up the proposed Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Central Lake Ontario CA
- Kawartha Region CA
- Otonabee Region CA
- Ganaraska Region CA
- Lower Trent Region CA
- Crowe Valley CA
- Quinte Region CA

## PROPOSED ST. LAWRENCE REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



### Current CAs that would make up the proposed St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Cataraqui Region CA
- Rideau Valley CA
- Mississippi Valley CA
- South Nation River CA
- Raisin Region CA

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## PROPOSED NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



### Current CAs that would make up the proposed Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Nickel District CA
- Sault Ste. Marie Region CA
- Mattagami Region CA
- North Bay-Mattawa CA

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## Regional Consolidation – Looking Ahead

- MECP and the Office of the Chief Conservation Executive will consider all feedback received during the consultation on the proposed boundaries for regional consolidation and to inform the proposed path forward.
- MECP would undertake further consultation at a future date on any additional proposed legislative and regulatory changes needed to enable regional consolidation.
- The new agency would lead the transition to regional CAs with conservation authority, municipal and stakeholder involvement, including providing guidance support throughout the consolidation process, such as:
  - Develop a structured process and roadmap outlining steps of the consolidation process, including the common standards and tools for use across CAs.
  - Provide support/expertise for CAs on the organizational aspects of consolidation (e.g., governance, HR).
  - Provide provincial-level coordination to address system-wide issues that may arise, to mitigate risks of delays.
- Changes not intended to be initiated until after municipal elections in October 2026; existing board members would continue to serve until the expiration of their terms next year.

## ERO Discussion Questions – Planning for the Future State

- What do you see as key factors to support a successful transition and outcome of regional conservation authority consolidation?
- What opportunities or benefits may come from a regional conservation authority framework?
- Do you have suggestions for how governance could be structured at the regional conservation authority level, including suggestions around board size, make-up and the municipal representative appointment process?
- Do you have suggestions on how to maintain a transparent and consultative budgeting process across member municipalities within a regional conservation authority?
- How can regional conservation authorities maintain and strengthen relationships with local communities and stakeholders?

## Questions?

**Environmental Registry of Ontario (Posting # 025-1257):** Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities

**Consultation period:** 45 days – November 7, 2025 to December 22, 2025

Comments on the proposal may be submitted on the ERO or by email to:  
[ca.office@ontario.ca](mailto:ca.office@ontario.ca).

# **Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities – supplemental document**

Posting closes December 22, 2025, at 11:59pm  
Please submit comments via the ERO posting or by email to  
[ca.office@ontario.ca](mailto:ca.office@ontario.ca)

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## Summary of Proposal

This proposal seeks feedback on proposed boundaries and criteria for the regional consolidation of Ontario's 36 conservation authorities.

It is proposed that Ontario's 36 conservation authorities would be consolidated into the following 7 regional conservation authorities:

- Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority – covers southwestern Ontario watersheds draining into Lake Erie, including the Thames, Grand, and Sydenham systems, supporting agriculture, industry, and shoreline communities. Primarily based on the Northern Lake Erie Secondary Watershed
- Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority – includes watersheds along Lake Huron's northern shore and the Lake Superior basin, supporting conservation and flood management across vast northern watersheds. Primarily based on the Eastern Lake Huron and southern portion of Eastern Georgian Bay Secondary Watershed and in the north the central portion of Northwestern Lake Superior Secondary Watershed.
- Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority – extends along the western Lake Ontario shoreline from Niagara through Halton and Peel, encompassing urban and rural watersheds that support the Greater Toronto–Hamilton corridor. Primarily based on the western portion of the Northern Lake Ontario and Niagara River Secondary Watershed.
- Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority – covers the watersheds from north of Toronto, including parts of York Region, west through Peel Region, east through Durham, and into parts of the Kawarthas, balancing urban growth and agricultural lands while protecting key tributaries to Lake Ontario. Primarily based on the central portion of the Northern Lake Ontario and Niagara River Secondary Watershed.
- Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority – Includes watersheds draining to eastern Lake Ontario and the Bay of Quinte, including the Trent and Cataraqui systems, supporting a mix of agricultural, urban, and coastal communities. Primarily based on the eastern portion of the Northern Lake Ontario and Niagara River Secondary Watershed.
- St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority – Encompasses watersheds flowing into the St. Lawrence River, including the Raisin and South Nation areas, coordinating flood and water management across eastern Ontario. Primarily based on the Upper St. Lawrence, Lower Ottawa River, and southern portion of the Central Ottawa River Second Watersheds.
- Northeastern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority – brings together the conservation authorities in the northeast, maintaining coordination across large

watershed areas and shared northern infrastructure and ecosystems. Its work focuses on maintaining healthy waterways, protecting natural habitats, and promoting sustainable land and water use across major watershed areas that span parts of Northern Lake Huron, the Abitibi, Missinaibi, Mattagami, Wanipitai, French, and Upper Ottawa River systems.

No changes are proposed to the overall extent of conservation authority jurisdiction within the province, and under consolidation the new regional conservation authorities would remain independent organizations operating with municipal governance and oversight, in accordance with requirements under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, as administered by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

In addition, the important work that conservation authorities do to protect people and property from the risks of flooding and other natural hazards will not change. The regional conservation authorities would continue to fulfill provincially mandated programs such as drinking water source protection under the *Clean Water Act*, managing development and other activities in areas at risk of natural hazards like flooding and erosion (e.g., floodplains, shorelines, watercourse and wetlands), flood forecasting and warning, and managing their lands and recreational trails so that Ontarians have access to local natural areas and outdoor activities. Regional conservation authorities would continue to provide additional municipal and other watershed programs and services set out under the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

We welcome your feedback in response to the proposed boundaries and criteria applied to inform the proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities. Comments may be submitted through the Environmental Registry posting or by email to [ca.office@ontario.ca](mailto:ca.office@ontario.ca).

## Boundary Criteria

Provided below are criteria applied for determining the proposed boundaries for regional conservation authorities:

- **Maintaining watershed-based jurisdictions** – Aligning with natural hydrological boundaries to support effective flood and water management, consistent with drinking water Source Protection Areas and Regions.
- **Relationships between conservation authorities and municipalities** – Reducing administrative duplication and overlap for municipalities and conservation authorities to simplify accountability and strengthen local partnerships.
- **Balancing expertise and capacity across conservation authorities** – Enhancing technical skills and resources across conservation authorities to improve service and program delivery.
- **Service Continuity** – Ensuring uninterrupted delivery of local conservation authority programs – including flood forecasting and warning, permitting, and source water protection – through and after consolidation.

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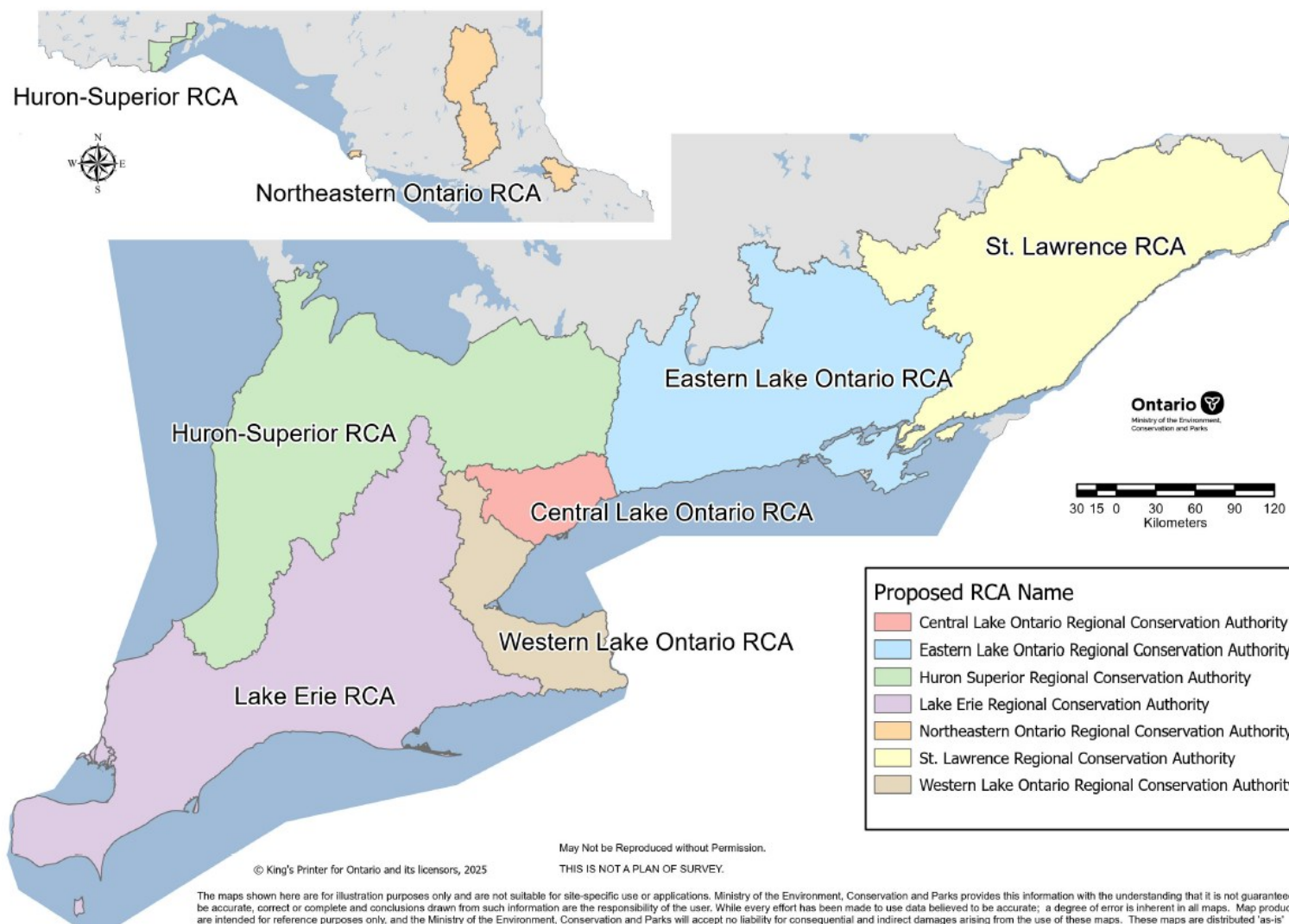
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Maps

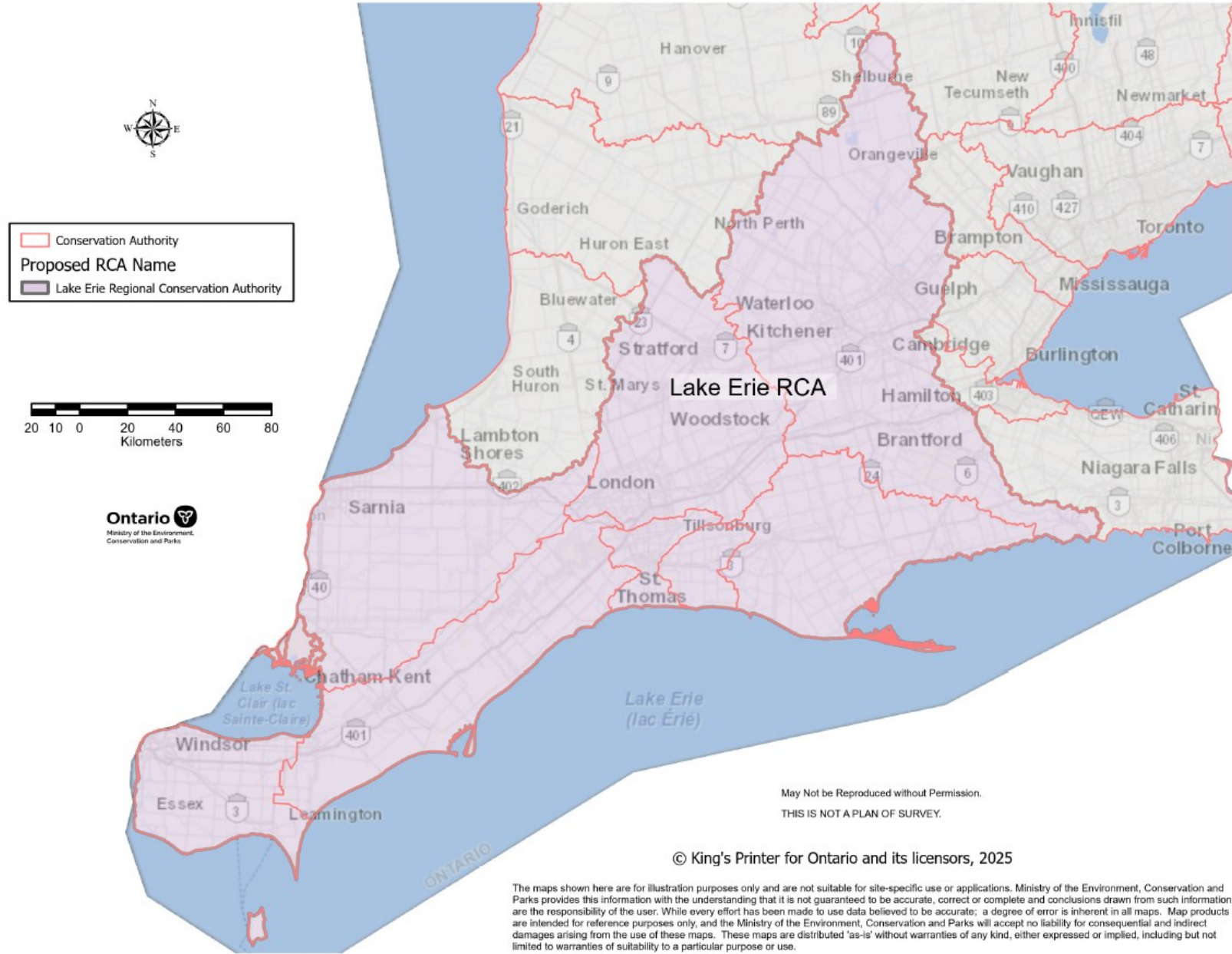
Map of Proposed Regional Conservation Authorities

**PROPOSED 7 REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES (RCA)**



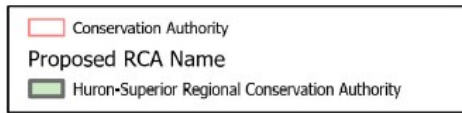
Map of Proposed Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority

**LAKE ERIE REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**



Map of Proposed Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority

**HURON-SUPERIOR REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**



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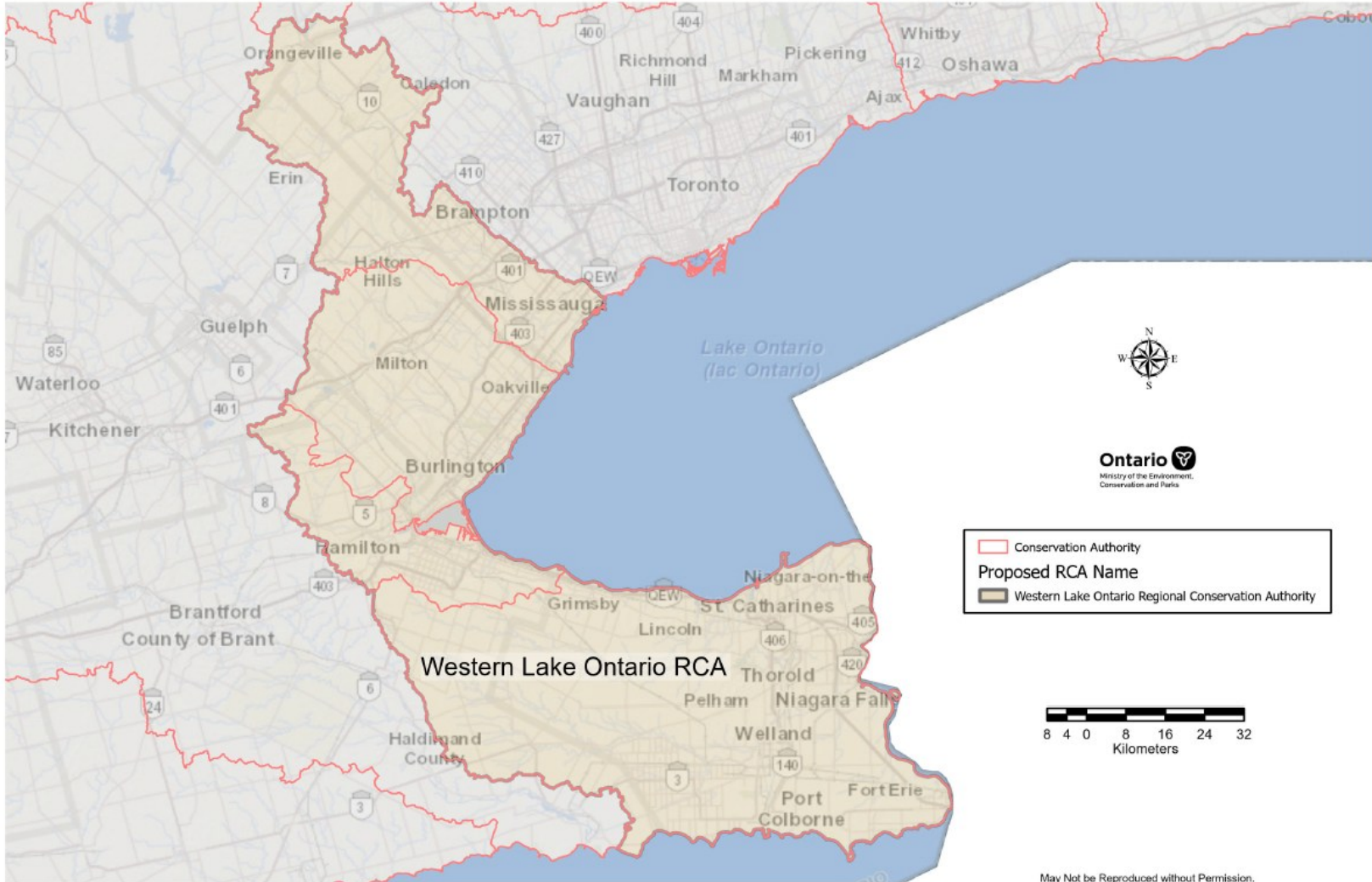


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Map of Proposed Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

**WESTERN LAKE ONTARIO REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**



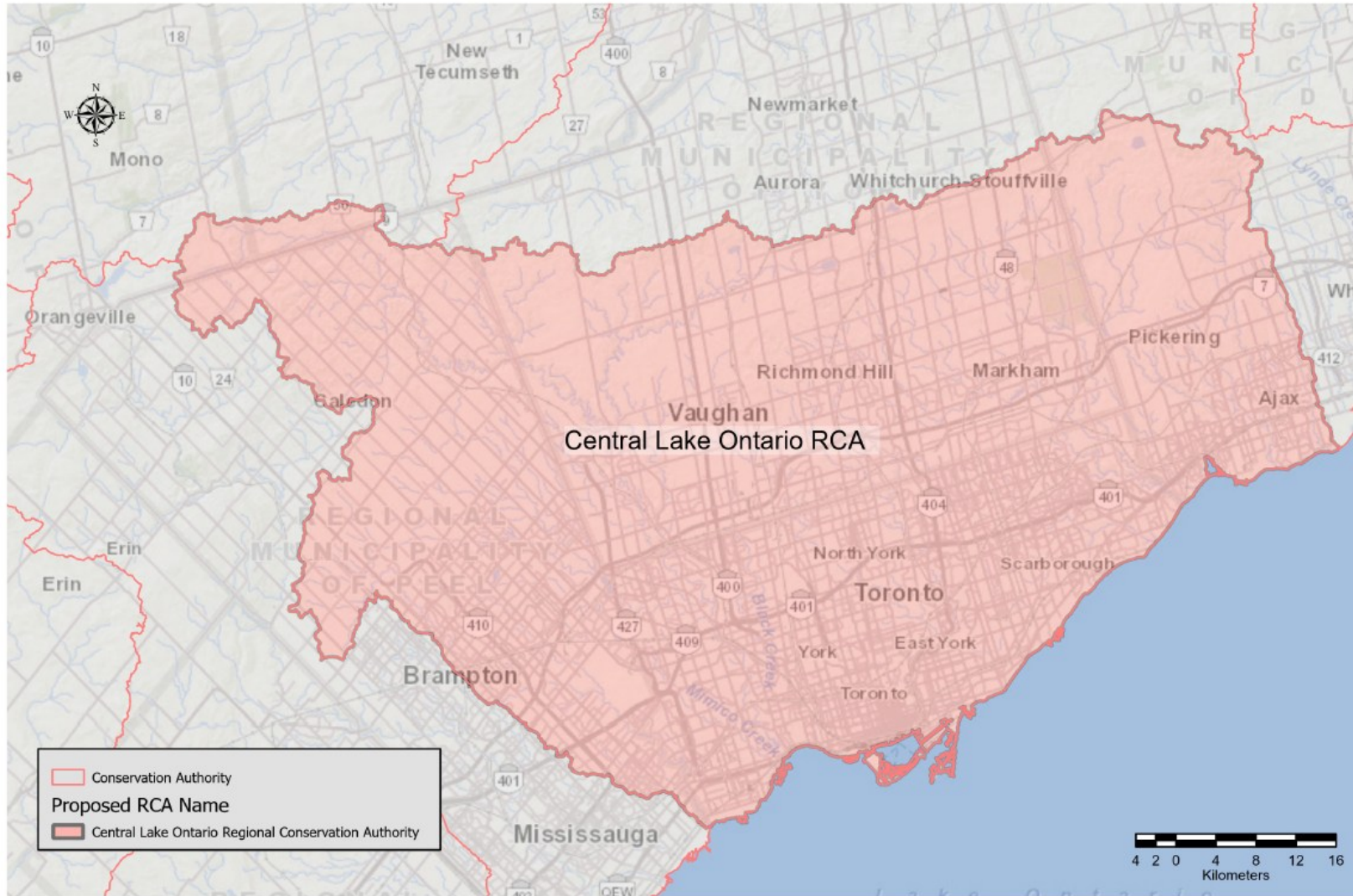
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Map of Proposed Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

**CENTRAL LAKE ONTARIO REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**



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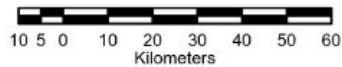
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Map of Proposed Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

**EASTERN LAKE ONTARIO REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**



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	Conservation Authority
<b>Proposed RCA Name</b>	
	Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

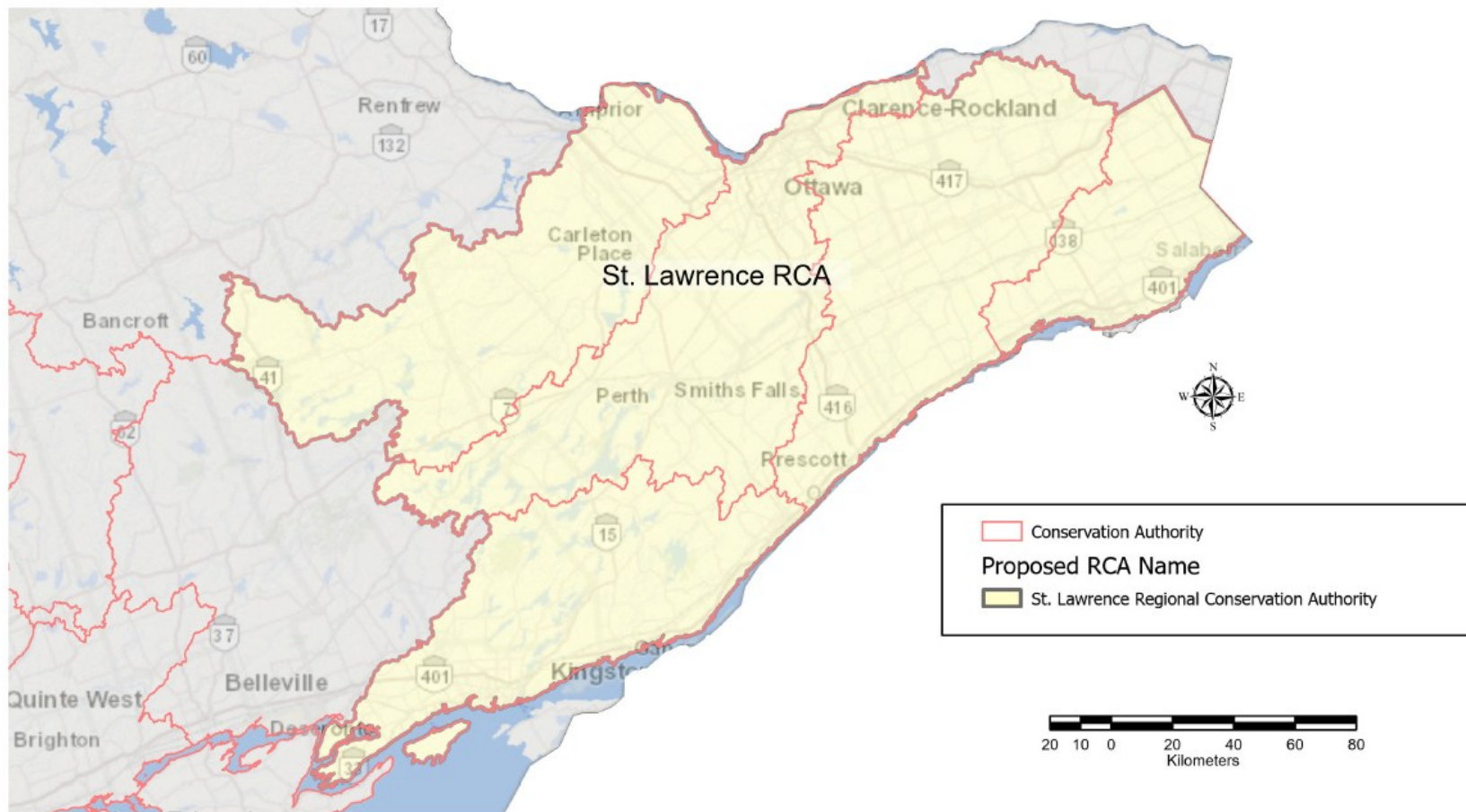


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Map of Proposed St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority

**ST. LAWRENCE REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**



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Map of Proposed Northeastern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

**NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**



	Conservation Authority
<b>Proposed RCA Name</b>	
	Northeastern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority



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## Listing of Municipalities and Conservation Authorities

Below are listings of the current conservation authorities that are proposed to be included with each regional conservation authority, and of the municipalities that would fall within each proposed regional conservation authority.

### Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority

Current conservation authorities that would make up the proposed Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Essex Region CA
- Lower Thames Valley CA
- St. Clair Region CA
- Upper Thames River CA
- Kettle Creek CA
- Catfish Creek CA
- Long Point Region CA
- Grand River CA

Municipalities that would fall within the proposed Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority include:

- City of Brantford
- City of Cambridge
- City of Guelph
- City of Hamilton
- City of Kitchener
- City of London
- City of Sarnia
- City of St. Thomas
- City of Stratford
- City of Waterloo
- City of Windsor
- City of Woodstock
- County of Brant
- Haldimand County
- Municipality of Bayham
- Municipality of Brooke-Alvinston
- Municipality of Central Elgin
- Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- Municipality of Dutton/Dunwich
- Municipality of Huron East
- Municipality of Lambton Shores
- Municipality of Leamington
- Municipality of Middlesex Centre
- Municipality of North Perth
- Municipality of South Huron
- Municipality of Southwest Middlesex
- Municipality of Thames Centre
- Municipality of West Elgin
- Municipality of West Perth
- Norfolk County
- Town of Amherstburg
- Town of Aylmer
- Town of Erin
- Town of Essex
- Town of Grand Valley
- Town of Halton Hills
- Town of Ingersoll
- Town of Kingsville
- Town of Lakeshore
- Town of Lasalle
- Town of Milton
- Town of Minto
- Town of Mono
- Town of Petrolia
- Town of Plympton-Wyoming
- Town of St. Marys
- Town of Tecumseh
- Town of Tillsonburg
- Township of Adelaide-Metcalf
- Township of Amaranth
- Township of Blandford-Blenheim
- Township of Centre Wellington
- Township of Dawn-Euphemia
- Township of East Garafraxa

- Township of East Zorra-Tavistock
- Township of Enniskillen
- Township of Guelph/Eramosa
- Township of Lucan Biddulph
- Township of Malahide
- Township of Mapleton
- Township of Melancthon
- Township of North Dumfries
- Township of Norwich
- Township of Pelee
- Township of Perth East
- Township of Perth South
- Township of Puslinch
- Township of Southgate
- Township of South-West Oxford
- Township of Southwold
- Township of St. Clair
- Township of Strathroy-Caradoc
- Township of Warwick
- Township of Wellesley
- Township of Wellington North
- Township of Wilmot
- Township of Woolwich
- Township of Zorra
- Village of Newbury
- Village of Oil Springs
- Village of Point Edward

## Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority

Current conservation authorities that would make up the proposed Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Ausable Bayfield CA
- Maitland Valley CA
- Saugeen Valley CA
- Grey Sauble CA
- Nottawasaga Valley CA
- Lake Simcoe Region CA
- Lakehead Region CA

Municipalities that would fall within the proposed Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority include:

- City of Barrie
- City of Kawartha Lakes
- City of Orillia
- City of Owen Sound
- City of Thunder Bay
- Municipality of Arran-Elderslie
- Municipality of Bluewater
- Municipality of Brockton
- Municipality of Central Huron
- Municipality of Grey Highlands
- Municipality of Huron East
- Municipality of Kincardine
- Municipality of Lambton Shores
- Municipality of Meaford
- Municipality of Middlesex Centre
- Municipality of Morris-Turnberry
- Municipality of Neebing
- Municipality of North Middlesex
- Municipality of North Perth
- Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula
- Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge
- Municipality of Shuniah
- Municipality of South Bruce
- Municipality of South Huron
- Municipality of West Grey
- Municipality of West Perth
- Town of Aurora
- Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury
- Town of Caledon
- Town of Collingwood
- Town of East Gwillimbury
- Town of Georgina
- Town of Goderich
- Town of Hanover
- Town of Innisfil
- Town of Minto
- Town of Mono
- Town of New Tecumseth
- Town of Newmarket

- Town of Richmond Hill
- Town of Saugeen Shores
- Town of Shelburne
- Town of South Bruce Peninsula
- Town of The Blue Mountains
- Town of Wasaga Beach
- Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Township of Adelaide Metcalfe
- Township of Adjala-Tosorontio
- Township of Amaranth
- Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh
- Township of Brock
- Township of Chatsworth
- Township of Clearview
- Township of Conmee
- Township of Dorion
- Township of Essa
- Township of Georgian Bluffs
- Township of Gillies
- Township of Howick
- Township of Huron-Kinloss
- Township of King
- Township of Lucan Biddulph
- Township of Mapleton
- Township of Melancthon
- Township of Mulmur
- Township of North Huron
- Township of O'Connor
- Township of Oro-Medonte
- Township of Perth East
- Township of Perth South
- Township of Ramara
- Township of Scugog
- Township of Severn
- Township of Southgate
- Township of Springwater
- Township of Tay
- Township of Tiny
- Township of Uxbridge
- Township of Warwick
- Township of Wellington North

## Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

Current conservation authorities that would make up the proposed Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Niagara Peninsula CA
- Hamilton Region CA
- Halton Region CA
- Credit Valley CA

Municipalities that would fall within up the proposed Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority include:

- City of Brampton
- City of Burlington
- City of Hamilton
- City of Mississauga
- City of Niagara Falls
- City of Port Colborne
- City of St. Catharines
- City of Thorold
- City of Toronto
- City of Welland
- Haldimand County
- Town of Caledon
- Town of Erin
- Town of Fort Erie
- Town of Grimsby
- Town of Halton Hills
- Town of Lincoln
- Town of Milton
- Town of Mono
- Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
- Town of Oakville
- Town of Orangeville
- Town of Pelham
- Township of Amaranth

- Township of East Garafraxa
- Township of Puslinch
- Township of Wainfleet
- Township of West Lincoln

## Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

Current conservation authorities that would make up the proposed Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Toronto and Region CA

Municipalities that would fall within the proposed Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority include:

- City of Brampton
- City of Markham
- City of Mississauga
- City of Pickering
- City of Toronto
- City of Vaughan
- Town of Ajax
- Town of Aurora
- Town of Caledon
- Town of Mono
- Town of New Tecumseth
- Town of Richmond Hill
- Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Township of Adjala-Tosorontio
- Township of King
- Township of Scugog
- Township of Uxbridge

## Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

Current conservation authorities that would make up the proposed Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Central Lake Ontario CA
- Kawartha Region CA
- Otonabee Region CA
- Ganaraska Region CA
- Lower Trent Region CA
- Crowe Valley CA
- Quinte Region CA

Municipalities that would fall within the proposed Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority include:

- City of Belleville
- City of Kawartha Lakes
- City of Oshawa
- City of Peterborough
- City of Pickering
- City of Quinte West
- County of Prince Edward County
- Municipality of Brighton
- Municipality of Centre Hastings
- Municipality of Clarington
- Municipality of Hastings Highlands
- Municipality of highlands East
- Municipality of Marmora and Lake
- Municipality of Port Hope
- Municipality of Trent Hills

- Municipality of Trent Lakes
- Municipality of Tweed
- Town of Ajax
- Town of Cobourg
- Town of Deseronto
- Town of Greater Napanee
- Town of Whitby
- Township of Addington Highlands
- Township of Alnwick/Haldimand
- Township of Asphodel-Norwood
- Township of Brock
- Township of Cavan Monaghan
- Township of Central Frontenac
- Township of Cramahe
- Township of Douro-Dummer
- Township of Faraday
- Township of Hamilton
- Township of Havelock-Belmont-Methuen
- Township of Limerick
- Township of Loyalist
- Township of Madoc
- Township of North Frontenac
- Township of North Kawartha
- Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan
- Township of Scugog
- Township of Selwyn
- Township of South Frontenac
- Township of Stirling-Rawdon
- Township of Stone Mills
- Township of Tudor and Cashel
- Township of Tyendinaga
- Township of Uxbridge
- Township of Wollaston

## St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority

Current conservation authorities that would make up the proposed St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Cataraqui Region CA
- Rideau Valley CA
- Mississippi Valley CA
- South Nation River CA
- Raisin Region CA

Municipalities that would fall within the proposed St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority include:

- City of Brockville
- City of Clarence-Rockland
- City of Cornwall
- City of Kingston
- City of Ottawa
- Municipality of Mississippi Mills
- Municipality of North Grenville
- Municipality of South Dundas
- Municipality of The Nation
- Town of Carleton Place
- Town of Gananoque
- Town of Greater Napanee
- Town of Perth
- Town of Prescott
- Town of Smiths Falls
- Township of Addington Highlands
- Township of Alfred and Plantagenet
- Township of Athens
- Township of Augusta
- Township of Beckwith
- Township of Central Frontenac
- Township of Champlain
- Township of Drummond/North Elmsley
- Township of East Hawkesbury
- Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal
- Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley
- Township of Front of Yonge
- Township of Greater Madawaska
- Township of Lanark Highlands
- Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands
- Township of Loyalist
- Township of Montague
- Township of North Dundas
- Township of North Frontenac
- Township of North Glengarry

- Township of North Stormont
- Township of Rideau Lakes
- Township of Russell
- Township of South Frontenac
- Township of South Glengarry
- Township of South Stormont
- Township of Stone Mills
- Township of Tay Valley
- Village of Casselman
- Village of Merrickville-Wolford
- Village of Westport

## Northeastern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

Current conservation authorities that would make up the proposed Northeastern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority include:

- Nickel District CA
- Sault Ste. Marie Region CA
- Mattagami Region CA
- North Bay-Mattawa CA

Municipalities that would fall within the proposed Northeastern Regional Conservation Authority include:

- City of Greater Sudbury
- City of North Bay
- City of Sault Ste. Marie
- City of Timmins
- Municipality of Callander
- Municipality of Powassan
- Municipality of East Ferris
- Town of Iroquois Falls
- Town of Mattawa
- Township of Black River-Matheson
- Township of Bonfield
- Township of Calvin
- Township of Chisholm
- Township of Matachewan
- Township of Mattawan
- Township of Nairn and Hyman
- Township of Nipissing
- Township of Papineau-Cameron
- Township of Prince