

Full Authority
17 November 2022
Agenda Item: 10

Bill 23 More Homes Built Faster Act

Background

The Provincial government introduced Bill 23 on the 25th of October 2022 that if passed as is will result in changes to the Conservation Authority Act. Schedule Two of the Act specifically outlines the changes to the Conservation Ontario Act. The implications will have an impact on CVCA's programs and services.

Some of the changes will also have a negative impact on municipalities as more money will be required from municipal taxpayers to cover off the additional duties and responsibilities that conservation authorities will no longer be performing.

Reduced conservation authority capabilities (proposed in the Bill that "pollution and conservation of land" be removed from Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act) will result in loss of ecosystems which will have environmental impacts, such as an increased risk of flooding.

There will also be budgetary implications for future CVCA budgets. For example, if the regulation area is reduced, then revenue is proportionately lower. That being said, until the legislation is passed, the status quo will be maintained. For the Board's information, the CVCA cost recovery is approximately 62% for the regulations and planning programs.

The Standing Committee of MPPs reviewing Bill 23 will be meeting for clause-by-clause consideration, before it returns to the House for third reading and a final vote.

The Eastern Ontario Conservation Authorities, including the CVCA have composed a letter to be sent to the Standing Committee outlining issues and concerns. Chair O'Neill has signed it on behalf of the CVCA Board. In addition, all conservation authorities in Eastern Ontario that many Mayors will endorse the letter as well. Staff will reach out to the Mayors in our watershed seeking their support.

Should the Board consider sending a letter to the Premier regarding the changes, a template letter has been provided by Conservation Ontario. (*see attached*)

In addition, the following material is provided for the Board Members:

- Conservation Ontario General Manager Angela Coleman has presented to the Standing Committee at the first public meeting (*see attached*)
- Conservation Ontario Media Release (*see attached*)
- From AMO 2 Nov 2022 – Unpacking Bill 23 – More Homes Built Faster Act

“Many of the proposed amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act and the Planning Act in Bill 23 are concerning, as they signal a move away from environmental protection at a time when climate change impacts are being felt more at the local level.

Bill 23 proposes sweeping changes to the regulatory responsibilities of Ontario’s 36 conservation authorities that, if passed, will undermine the collaborative and productive changes put forward by the Ministry led Conservation Authority Working Group over the past two years.

The proposals under Schedule 2 have raised confusion around how these changes will impact the Conservation Authorities Act regulations that recently came into effect. AMO is seeking further clarification to understand how these amendments will impact municipal budgets and environmental outcomes. At first glance, they seem to result in negative consequences (i.e., increased flooding, liability), at a time when the impacts of climate change are increasingly prevalent.

Another emerging area of concern is the proposal to allow pits and quarries to request official plan amendments within two years of a new official plan or secondary plan coming into effect. Finally, there are numerous environmental implications associated with the use of more land and the proposed reduction in revenues to build parkland.”

Staff Recommendation

That the template letter provided by Conservation Ontario be sent to the Premier of Ontario with the appropriate changes or suggestions to customize it from the CVCA

Board Decision

TP