

# Media Release



## Pressure grows to remove Schedule 6 from Bill 229

**Nov. 25, 2020** – Municipalities have joined the call to remove proposed changes to conservation authorities from the provincial budget bill – and **now we need you to add your voice** to the growing list of groups and organizations speaking up.

More than just a budget, Bill 229 proposes legislative changes that will **weaken conservation authorities' ability to protect people, property and the environment.**

Such changes do not belong in a budget bill, which is exempt from consultation on the Environmental Registry of Ontario. That's why many municipalities are calling for Schedule 6 to be withdrawn from the budget bill and for the province to engage in meaningful consultation on the proposed changes.

"We understand that the province has a desire to improve conservation authorities," said Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, General Manager of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA). "But we need the Province to work with conservation authorities and municipalities on those changes, to ensure they are effective and do not jeopardize our fundamental ability to protect people and the environment – a responsibility Rideau Valley communities have relied on us to deliver for more than 50 years."

Conservation authorities have identified **several major concerns** with the proposed changes, which will directly affect municipalities, residents and watersheds. These include changes to Board governance, including who a municipality can appoint to represent them; new powers enabling the Minister to override a conservation authority and issue a development permit in a watershed without a hearing and with no appeal; the removal of enforcement tools and a conservation authority's ability to appeal planning decisions; potential provincial interference in local budgets and fees; and limitations on programs, with a decreased focus on environmental monitoring, stewardship and outdoor education.

**In short, these are not small changes.** They will bring increased administrative costs and burden for municipalities and conservation authorities, an erosion of local decision-making, patchwork program delivery across watersheds, decreased resources for capital renewal, and an undermining of the integrity, transparency and effectiveness of our planning and permitting processes.

Residents, groups and associations who are concerned about these changes need to make their voices heard this week **before the bill goes to Standing Committee.**

### **You are encouraged to:**

- Contact your local MPP and Ontario's Minister of Finance ([Hon. Rod Phillips](#))
- You can also contact Ontario's Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks ([Hon. Jeff Yurek](#)), Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing ([Hon. Steve Clark](#)) and Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry ([Hon. John Yakabuski](#)).
- Written comments can also be submitted to Ontario's Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs [here](#).

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Diane Downey  
Director of Communications and Outreach  
Rideau Valley Conservation Authority  
Tel: 613-698-9453  
Email: [diane.downey@rvca.ca](mailto:diane.downey@rvca.ca)

**MORE INFORMATION:**

Canadian Environmental Law Association:  
<https://cela.ca/action-alert-we-need-our-conservation-authorities/>

Ontario Nature:  
<https://ontarionature.good.do/conservationauthorities/send/>

Conservation Ontario:  
<https://conservationontario.ca/policy-priorities/conservation-authorities-act>