

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM12.6	ACTION			Ward: All
--------	--------	--	--	-----------

Promoting effective 21st Century Flood Mitigation and Resilience - by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, seconded by Councillor Paula Fletcher

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, seconded by Councillor Paula Fletcher, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the City Manager to work with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to develop a terms of reference for a Lake Ontario Resilience Group, including what issues it could respond to and who could be invited to participate, and City Council direct the City Manager to report to the March 11, 2020 meeting of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee to clarify how Lake-related issues are identified, responded to, and funded for overall jurisdictional clarity.

Summary

The last few years have revealed the impacts of climate change on Lake Ontario. We saw high lake levels in 2017, and we saw them in 2018. We all know more is coming. This past summer brought with it a new dynamic that caught Toronto residents by surprise: the highest Lake Ontario water levels on record. The high water levels accelerated the erosion of waterfront trails, shut down beaches, burdened Toronto Island residents and businesses with flooding; causing millions of dollars in damage overall. Our City was only one of the communities affected by this phenomenon in the Great Lakes Basin, home to over 30 million people. Environment Canada and Climate Change is forecasting "well above average" lake water levels in the coming months, and released data showing Lake Ontario's October precipitation was almost double its monthly average with the net supply of water increasing by five-times monthly averages. This is despite Lake Ontario's outflow reaching 313,000 cfs (cubic feet per second), 33 percent higher than average. This Motion is inspired by the desire to openly and honestly acknowledge the reality that intensifying climate change renders record high lake water levels as a fact of life, not a one-off event.

Adapting to this new paradigm necessitates an additional acknowledgement of the disparate and complex assortment of agencies, departments, and organizations that share the general responsibility of managing waterfront issues. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority is responsible for riverine flooding. In terms of Lake-based flooding, the Toronto and Region

Conservation Authority has responsibility for helping to disseminate forecast information from Environment Canada and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, but municipalities are responsible for emergency response implementation and the International Lake Ontario St. Lawrence River Board is responsible for regulating outflows from Lake Ontario. Roles, responsibilities and funding mechanisms for lakeshore resilience measures are site-specific and complicated, often involving different levels of government. There is no single table for all of the participants to meet at, where consensus and communication can be stimulated and where comprehensive decisions can be debated, approved, and advanced. We need clarity on who identifies lake flooding challenges, who funds responses, and who fixes them. The challenges of climate change will worsen the effects of flooding, and require creating a body to coordinate flood mitigation expertise and resources as a complement to our City's Resilience Strategy.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM12.6