

REVISED



Member Motion

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM26.8	ACTION			Ward: All
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Opposition to the Government of Ontario's changes to Conservation Authorities - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Paula Fletcher

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

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

Communications MM26.8.1 to MM26.8.3 have been submitted on this Item.

Recommendations

Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Paula Fletcher, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Government of Ontario to remove proposed amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act and the Planning Act in Bill 229 relating to planning, permitting and enforcement, and to include strengthened provisions related to enforcement, in order to support a balanced approach to development, enable Conservation Authorities to mitigate natural hazards and protect natural heritage, and to prevent any downloading of enforcement costs to municipalities
2. City Council request the Government of Ontario to reverse its decision to eliminate citizen experts from the board of Conservation Authorities.
3. City Council request that this decision be forwarded to the Premier, the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Finance, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, all City of Toronto MPPs, all Conservation Authorities serving the City of Toronto jurisdiction, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

Summary

On November 5, 2020, the Government of Ontario introduced Bill 229, Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act (Budget Measures), 2020, an Omnibus Bill that proposes limitations to Conservation Authorities' permitting, planning and enforcement powers if passed, will work to diminish Conservation Authorities' ability to fulfill the Act's purpose and objects.

Conservation Authorities are tasked with protecting life and property and the preservation of significant natural features within our watersheds and fast-growing communities in the Greater Toronto Area. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority plays a crucial role in the permitting process, often on behalf of our partner municipalities.

Included in these proposed changes was the removal of citizen experts from the board of Conservation Authorities, which is anti-democratic and anti-science at a time when reliance upon facts and making informed choices are integral to fighting the climate change emergency.

These changes will hinder Conservation Authorities' abilities to fulfill their mandates, do not reflect the Provincial Flood Advisor and Auditor General recommendations, and recently updated Provincial land use policies, and are problematic for the partner municipalities that they serve who rely on Conservation Authorities to help regulate development and illegal activities.

Further, these changes may have hidden costs for municipalities as enforcement issues will get downloaded to municipal jurisdiction with no indication of funding to offset these new services.

The City of Toronto must vehemently oppose these changes and work to provide support to our Conservation Authorities to fulfill their mandate, and empower them to take a leading role tackling climate change and supporting the protection of life and property and significant natural features.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM26.8

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-158646.pdf>

Communications (City Council)

(November 24, 2020) Letter from Leslie Gooding, Co-Chir, High Park Natural Environment Committee (MM.New.MM26.8.1)

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/mm/comm/communicationfile-124049.pdf>

(November 25, 2020) Letter from Lenka Holubec, ProtectNatureTO (MM.New.MM26.8.2)

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/mm/comm/communicationfile-124060.pdf>
(November 24, 2020) E-mail from Catherine Berka (MM.New.MM26.8.3)