

Mila Raic

From: Clerks
Sent: April 21, 2026 9:57 AM
To: Mila Raic
Subject: FW: Conservation Authority Letter of Support

April 20, 2026
Mayor David Bailey:

Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Conservation Authority Consolidation (Bill 68, Schedule 3)

Dear Mayor Bailey:

On behalf of the Cathcart Women's Institute of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) and our members, we are writing to formally support the resolution put forward by United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, to maintain local, independent, and municipally governed watershed-based conservation authorities.

Conservation authorities (CAs) collectively manage thousands of acres of land—much of which was donated by local residents and entrusted to these bodies as a personal legacy. These donors acted with the clear expectation that their land would be stewarded by locally governed authorities committed to long-term protection and the local public good.

We have significant concerns regarding **Bill 68 (Schedule 3)**, which proposes to consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into nine regional entities governed by a provincial Crown corporation, the **Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency**.

The loss of local oversight is particularly troubling for the following reasons:

- **Breach of Public Trust:** Transferring lands donated by community members to a centralized provincial entity feels like a repurposing of assets without local consent.
- **Erosion of Stewardship:** Local CAs provide specialized, community-focused programs—including fishing, bird watching, paddling, and hiking—that foster a direct connection between residents and their environment.
- **Effective Governance:** The current watershed-based model ensures that environmental management remains responsive to the unique ecological and social needs of each region.

It is the hope of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario that the Province will work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to identify a strategic path forward. We believe any modernization should enhance—rather than replace—the effective local governance that has protected Ontario's natural heritage for decades.

Sincerely,

Members of Cathcart Women's Institute of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario

c/o Janet Barnard, Secretary Cathcart WI