



July 3, 2008

Mr. Denis Kelly
Regional Clerk
Corporate and Legal Services
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
P.O. Box 147
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

Dear Mr. Kelly:

At Authority Meeting #5/08, of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), held on June 27, 2008, Resolution #A140/08, in regard to Environmental Commissioner of Ontario 2006/2007 Report was approved as follows:

WHEREAS the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (ECO) strongly advocates the need to change the way planning is undertaken in Ontario to address environmental impacts related to projected growth and its attendant pressures on the natural and physical infrastructure of the province;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) support, where applicable, the ten recommendations of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his report of 2006/07 titled "Reconciling Our Priorities", while recognizing the progress that has been made within TRCA watersheds, and request provincial ministries to take the appropriate actions to address 'irreconcilable priorities';

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA's member municipalities, the provincial ministries of Natural Resources, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Public Infrastructure Renewal, Environment, Northern Development and Mines and Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the ECO and the Grand River Conservation Authority be so advised.

Enclosed for your information and any action deemed necessary is the report as presented to the Authority. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact the undersigned at 416-661-6600 extension 5264 (kstranks@trca.on.ca) or David Burnett at extension 5361.

Sincerely



Kathy Stranks
Manager, Chair and CAO's Office

cc. David Burnett, Manager, Provincial and Regional Policy, TRCA

/Encl.

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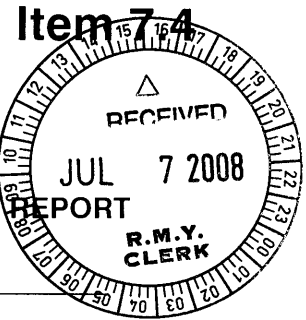
**REGION OF YORK
CLERK'S OFFICE**

FILE No. -

TO: Chair and Members of the Authority
Meeting #5/08, June 27, 2008

FROM: Carolyn Woodland, Director, Planning and Development

RE: **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO 2006/2007 REPORT**
Grand River Conservation Authority Recommendations



KEY ISSUE

Supporting the Grand River Conservation Authority endorsement of the recommendations made by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his 2007 report.

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (ECO) strongly advocates the need to change the way planning is undertaken in Ontario to address environmental impacts related to projected growth and its attendant pressures on the natural and physical infrastructure of the province;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) support, where applicable, the ten recommendations of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his report of 2006/07 titled "Reconciling Our Priorities", while recognizing the progress that has been made within TRCA watersheds, and request provincial ministries to take the appropriate actions to address 'irreconcilable priorities';

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA's member municipalities, the provincial ministries of Natural Resources, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Public Infrastructure Renewal, Environment, Northern Development and Mines and Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the ECO and the Grand River Conservation Authority be so advised.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on March 29, 2008, the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) resolved to support the ten recommendations contained in the 2006/07 report of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (ECO) and requested that other conservation authorities pass similar resolutions (Attachment 1). The report of the ECO identifies a number of irreconcilable priorities from the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and other provincial planning-related documents that represent a challenge to creating sustainable communities in southern Ontario. Some of these irreconcilable priorities include:

- protecting provincially significant wetlands from development while allowing infrastructure to be constructed within;
- preserving significant natural areas from development while allowing for aggregate extraction within;
- requiring municipalities to plan for additional growth and population in the face of environmental limits to providing servicing capacity for unbuilt but approved growth;
- expanding road networks while facing increasing contamination of water sources from road salts; and
- directing intensification to take place in areas currently subject to flooding hazards.

RATIONALE

Gord Miller is the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. He released his annual report titled *Reconciling Our Priorities* in December, 2007. The report notes that the provincial planning framework of legislation, policies and regulations is intended to promote sound land use planning and protection of ecological values. However, when ecological values and economic, political and social priorities are factored into decision making, the ECO report identifies that more often than not, decisions are made in favour of the latter priorities to the detriment of ecological values. The report also identifies a need to revise existing legislation such as the Mining Act and the Public Lands Act to provide the tools needed to maintain and enhance ecological values. The 10 recommendations of the ECO report (in italics), and their current state within TRCA watersheds, are summarized below. In a number of instances, TRCA and our municipal and other partners are already on the leading edge of addressing the recommendations of the ECO, which can be used as examples to inform provincial directions.

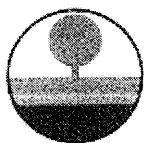
1. *That the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) speed up the process of wetland identification and evaluation and ensure Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs) are incorporated into municipal official plans.* Within TRCA watersheds the identification, evaluation and incorporation of PSWs into municipal official plans, especially for the Oak Ridges Moraine, has generally been quite good, largely due to the area's extraordinary development pressures.
2. *That the PPS be revised to prohibit new infrastructure in PSWs unless there are no reasonable alternatives and there will be no negative impacts.* This recommendation is directly applicable as wetlands in TRCA watersheds are still being negatively impacted by infrastructure projects such as the Highway 410 extension.
3. *That aggregate proposals conflicting with natural heritage or source water protection values be screened out early during the aggregate approvals process.* TRCA supports a full and early assessment of aggregate proposals to ensure protection of the natural environment and sources of drinking water.
4. *That the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe's intensification and density targets be increased.* TRCA supports increasing density targets and intensification and made this comment previously in response to the draft Growth Plan, recommending that increased impacts and use pressures on urban parks and open space systems would need to be offset with a more robust natural heritage system within the urban boundary.
5. *That the Mining Act be reformed to reflect the land use priorities of Ontarians, including ecological values.* This recommendation is not directly applicable in TRCA watersheds but is still worthy of support.
6. *That the Public Lands Act be reformed to provide MNR with better tools to protect ecological values on Crown lands.* This recommendation has limited applicability as there are no Crown lands in TRCA jurisdiction, other than the bed of Lake Ontario. TRCA does, however, support providing MNR with better tools to ensure the broad based protection and enhancement of the natural environment.
7. *That a province-wide road salts management strategy be developed.* Many of TRCA's municipal partners have been actively implementing their own salt management plans to reduce the impact on aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and limit potential groundwater contamination of private and municipal wells. TRCA recently convened a salt management workshop for the Don watershed plan to further address this issue.

8. *Improve the speed at which aggregate pits are rehabilitated, apply current legislation to grandfathered licences and hire more aggregate inspectors.* The cumbersome process to modify existing pit licences and rehabilitation plans to incorporate natural heritage system improvements and public use recreational trails is frustrating to pit operators, public agencies and citizens alike. TRCA is currently working with stakeholders in the Township of Uxbridge to address these issues in the Glen Major area.
9. *Development of standards for the land application of stable and pathogen-free sewage biosolids.* Within the Greater Toronto Area, lands available for the spreading of sewage biosolids are decreasing due to increasing urbanization. Some municipalities such as Durham Region have undertaken a master plan process to address the issue. Sustainable alternative uses such as the use of biosolids for soil remediation on brownfield sites or for reclamation and rehabilitation of aggregate pits are being investigated.
10. *Minimize cumulative effects of heavy atmospheric emitters through obtaining emissions offsets and improve upon / update older Certificates of Approvals in heavily burdened airsheds.* This would potentially reduce greenhouse gas emissions, assist in achieving the Remedial Action Plan (RAP) goals within the Toronto and Region Area of Concern (AOC), contribute to TRCA reforestation projects as offsets and is a beneficial recommendation that should be supported.

Only some of the ten recommendations of the ECO report are directly applicable in TRCA watersheds and in the Toronto and Region AOC. Their implementation, however, would provide important benefits to the natural environment throughout the province as well as to help make significant gains towards restoring the AOC. Staff recommend that TRCA support the recommendations of the ECO, where applicable, and request the province take the appropriate actions to implement the recommendations to reconcile these irreconcilable priorities. The implementation of such actions would also confirm the province's commitment to restore environmental conditions in the Toronto and Region AOC and protect Lake Ontario.

Report prepared by: David Burnett, extension 5361
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Date: May 14, 2008
Attachments: 1

Attachment 1



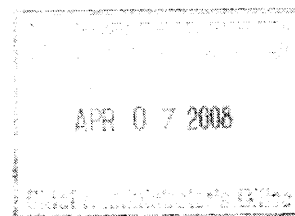
Grand River Conservation Authority

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April 3, 2008.

Ms. Gerri Lynn O'Connor, Chair,
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority,
5 Shoreham Drive,
Downsview, ON M3N 1S4



Dear Chair O'Connor:

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario released his latest annual report "*Reconciling our Priorities*" on December 4, 2007. Commissioner Miller urges the Province to take a broad view of environmental impacts associated with projected population growth in Ontario and the attendant stresses on the natural and physical infrastructure of the Province. The Commissioner is concerned that development pressures may lead to over exceeding the environmental limits or carrying capacity of the natural system upon which we depend for ecological services (e.g. waste assimilation, drinking water, etc.), demands for additional transportation infrastructure to accommodate more cars which results in further environmental degradation of the air, land and water, and continued aggregate extraction in environmentally sensitive areas.

The Grand River Conservation Authority concurs with the Commissioner regarding the need to address these issues sooner rather than later. For this reason, the Grand River Conservation Authority supports the ten recommendations outlined on pages 206-207 of the Commissioner's report and is requesting that the Province to take prompt action in implementing each one (see attached).

At its meeting on March 29, 2008, the Grand River Conservation Authority members, by Resolution No. 35-08 ratified Motin No. CW-33-08 as follows:

WHEREAS the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (ECO) strongly advocates the need to change the way planning is undertaken in Ontario to address environmental impacts related to projected growth and its attendant pressures on the natural and physical infrastructure of the province, be it resolved:

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority support the ten recommendations contained in the 2006/2007 Annual Report of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and request the appropriate provincial agencies to take the appropriate actions to address "irreconcilable priorities";



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AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority request member municipalities to support these recommendations and ask appropriate provincial agencies to take appropriate action to address "irreconcilable priorities";

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority request member municipalities to incorporate sustainable water and environmental concepts into their Official Plans at the next available opportunity;

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority request member municipalities and provincial agencies to support an update to the Grand River Basin Water Management Study which focuses on sustainable water management in the Grand River watershed and addresses the cumulative impacts of climate change and population growth on water quality and quantity;

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority ask Conservation Authorities located within the Greater Golden Horseshoe to endorse a similar motion which requests their member municipalities to undertake similar actions.

Consequently, the Grand River Conservation Authority would ask that you join us in requesting the Premier and the appropriate Ministers to implement the Commissioner's recommendations promptly and to encourage your member municipalities to do likewise.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss our request further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours very truly,



Alan Dale, Chair,
Grand River Conservation Authority.

c.c. Gord Miller,
Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

2006/07 ECO Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The ECO recommends that MNR significantly speed up the process of wetland identification and evaluation and ensure that Provincially Significant Wetlands are incorporated into municipal official plans.

Recommendation 2

The ECO recommends that MMAH amend the Provincial Policy Statement to prohibit new infrastructure such as highways in Provincially Significant Wetlands unless there are no reasonable alternatives and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on their ecological functions.

Recommendation 3

The ECO recommends that the provincial government reconcile its conflicting priorities between aggregate extraction and environmental protection. Specifically, the province should develop a new mechanism within the ARA approvals process that screens out, at an early stage, proposals conflicting with identified natural heritage or source water protection values.

Recommendation 4

The ECO recommends that MMAH work with MPIR to increase the GGH Plan's intensification and density targets above existing business-as-usual development targets.

Recommendation 5

The ECO recommends that MNDM reform the *Mining Act* to reflect land use priorities of Ontarians today, including ecological values.

Recommendation 6

The ECO recommends that MNR reform the *Public Lands Act* to create a planning system that provides MNR with the tools to better protect ecological values on all Crown lands.

Recommendation 7

The ECO recommends that MOE develop a comprehensive, mandatory, province-wide road salts management strategy to ensure aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems are protected from chlorides.

Recommendation 8

The ECO recommends that MNR improve the rehabilitation rates of Ontario pits and quarries by introducing stronger legislation with targets and timelines, by applying up-to-date rules to grandparented licences, and by further strengthening the ministry's own field capacity for inspections.

Recommendation 9

The ECO recommends that MOE and OMAFRA develop quality standards that support land application of stable "pathogen-free" sewage biosolids.

Recommendation 10

The ECO recommends that, where new emitters are seeking entry into heavily burdened airsheds, MOE implement measures to minimize cumulative effects, for example, by obtaining emission offsets and speeding up the process of updating older Cs of A in that airshed.