

November 13, 2016

Chair and Members
Strategic Policy and Priorities Committee
City Council
London, Ontario

Dear Mayor Brown and Councillors:

Re: Funding for the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

I have read the UTRCA's *Draft Environmental Targets: Strategic Plan, June 2016*, which I understand has already been adopted by the UTRCA Board and will guide the UTRCA's programs between 2017 and 2037.

I fully support the UTRCA's request for increased funding to achieve the four targets of the Strategic Plan, listed below:

1. **Target 1:** Improve each watershed's water quality score by one grade, as measured by UTRCA Watershed Report Cards, by 2037;
2. **Target 2:** Establish and restore 1,500 hectares of natural vegetation cover, windbreaks and buffers by 2037;
3. **Target 3:** Reduce flood and erosion risk by updating flood models and hazard mapping for all UTRCA subwatersheds by 2020, then integrating climate change scenarios into the updated models and developing climate change adaptation strategies by 2030; and
4. **Target 4:** Reach 1 million people annually with conservation messages through access to UTRCA's lands and demonstration of green infrastructure by the year 2030.

I am aware that the UTRCA is one of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities with a mandate, under the Conservation Authorities Act, 1946, to establish and undertake, in the area in which it has jurisdiction, a program designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal and minerals. Their objectives are to

- ensure that Ontario's rivers, lakes and streams are properly safeguarded, managed and restored;
- to protect, manage and restore Ontario's woodlands, wetlands and natural habitat;
- to develop and maintain programs that will protect life and property from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion; and
- to provide opportunities for the public to enjoy, learn from and respect Ontario's natural environment.

These objectives are all important for a healthy and safe environment, and obviously require adequate funding by municipalities and other funding agencies if the objectives are to be met. Whereas Conservation Ontario in 2013 listed the average amount of funding to Conservation Authorities from municipal levies as 48%, the UTRCA lists its municipal levy as 21.89% in 2016. This suggests the UTRCA's request for increased municipal funding is certainly not out of line, and deserves serious consideration by City Council. The approximate increase in taxes resulting from the UTRCA's increased budget would be about 40 cents in 2017, 54 cents in 2018, and 60 cents in 2019 for the average taxpayer. This is a tiny amount considering the very important goals to be achieved to make our environment healthier and safer for all organisms. It

will also help the UTCA, in partnership with the Provincial Government, meet the provincial government's targets outlined in Ontario's new wetland strategic plan, *A Wetland Conservation Strategy 2016—2030*.

Thank you for considering the above comments.

Sincerely,

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