



September 23, 2022

The Honourable Graydon Smith, MPP  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry  
Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W  
Toronto ON M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Smith,

Please accept this letter and supplementary information as a formal request on behalf of the General Membership of the Grand River Conservation Authority for an exception under the Conservation Authorities Act as per s.17(1.3)(a). Specifically, the GRCA is seeking an exception to the two consecutive one-year term limits for Chair and Vice-Chair to allow for up to four one-year consecutive terms for each position.

Due to the size and scale of the Grand River watershed, it takes time for the Chair and Vice Chair to become fully briefed and engaged on the complexities of the organization. Prior to the recent legislative change, the GRCA By-law allowed for up to five one-year consecutive terms for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair. The overall maximum was established as 5 one-year terms to reflect the duration of a municipal council term with the possible addition of a fifth year to provide continuity of leadership, all subject to the annual election process. Allowing a Chair and Vice-Chair to be re-elected into their positions for up to four consecutive years, allows people elected to these roles to develop a stronger understanding of the organization and build relationships with the other 25 Board members, both of which improve their ability to provide appropriate oversight and leadership for the Board. Four years is consistent with typical municipal, provincial, and federal terms and would allow greater opportunity to facilitate building effective relationships with elected officials at all levels of government.

The current Chair and Vice-Chair have been fully engaged in the current *Conservation Authorities Act*, *Planning Act*, and new regulation discussions and are currently involved in numerous discussions with all levels of government on matters to champion Memorandums of Understanding. Subject to their re-election on an annual basis, it would be beneficial to the organization for them to continue in their roles beyond the limit of two one-year terms to ensure continuity and stability as we implement the new CA Act provisions and forthcoming regulations.

These exception requests are being sought as ongoing governance practices to be updated in the GRCA By-law rather than as one-time exceptions. If a permanent change is not considered appropriate, we would appreciate the exception being granted to allow for up to four one-year terms until the GRCA's annual election in 2025, and then we will re-apply again closer to that time for further consideration.

Thank you for your consideration of the above requests. If you have any questions, please follow up with me at [slawson@grandriver.ca](mailto:slawson@grandriver.ca) or 519-621-2763, extension 2210.

Sincerely,

Samantha Lawson  
Chief Administrative Officer

Enclosures