



June 29, 2017

Via email only to Regional and Municipal Clerks

Chairs, Mayors and Members of Council
LSRCA Member Municipalities

Dear Chairs, Mayors and Members of Council:

Re: The Township of Ramara

I am writing to inform you that the Township of Ramara (Ramara) has appealed the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority's (LSRCA) levy apportionment for 2017 and has informed LSRCA that it no longer wishes to be a member. While rationale for this decision has not been provided in writing, Ramara Mayor and Council did imply during a meeting that the municipality is not getting a fair return on its investment and that LSRCA is limiting Ramara's ability to grow.

The current levy apportionment to Ramara is approximately \$42,213, which funds core programming and services such as water risk management (flood forecasting and warning, hazard mapping, implementation of the Section 28 regulations including enforcement, plan review), integrated watershed management (development and implementation of subwatershed plans, source water protection), as well as corporate services support (administration and basic operations).

Currently, Ramara is a member of LSRCA, and accordingly LSRCA is required through provincial legislation to deliver specific core services to its member municipalities. LSRCA is expending significant resources to deliver water risk and integrated watershed management programs within Ramara and is resolute that the benefiting municipality should be responsible for its share of funds to cover these expenses. The consequences of Ramara's non-payment of its levy would shift this financial burden to our other member municipalities, an outcome that is neither fair nor equitable, and LSRCA will be seeking a ruling to ensure that Ramara continues to pay its fair share of the levy as required.

Ramara's appeal has been made through the *Conservation Authorities Act*, Section 27, to the Mining and Lands Commission and will result in a hearing where upon both parties will present their cases for judgement. As the outcome of the hearing will directly impact each municipality as a funding partner, each member municipality will have the option to attend and represent its own interests at the hearing. As this could require significant municipal staff time and resources, instead I would like to recommend an alternate approach which would still be as impactful as your municipality's attendance at the hearing. This alternate approach involves gaining each member municipality's support by way of a resolution of support that would

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request that the Township of Ramara be directed to pay its share of LSRCA's 2017 levy. The resolutions would be introduced during the hearing to support LSRCA's position that Ramara be held accountable and pay its fair and equitable share towards the provincially mandated programs being delivered by LSRCA.

Ramara's suggestion that they are not receiving good return on their investment is totally unfounded as they have benefited financially probably more than any other municipality in the watershed. The costs to undertake hazard mapping, subwatershed plans and fund remedial projects have largely been resourced through LSRCA's partnerships with the Federal and Provincial governments, as well as the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation and other interest groups. From 2010 to 2016, a total of 146 remedial projects were completed in Ramara at a total cost of more than \$2.4 million dollars. The total investment by Ramara towards these programs for this period was \$105,844, which equates to a return of more than \$23 dollars for every \$1 invested. Costs associated with completing the subwatershed planning totalled approximately \$234,000, of which Ramara contributed \$37,500 resulting in a return of \$5 dollars for every \$1 dollar invested. Other services such as education and engagement, environmental monitoring, and a host of support services associated with implementation of the Lake Simcoe Protection Act and Plan have been provided at no cost to Ramara.

It truly is unfortunate that Ramara does not recognize the value of its membership with LSRCA and is opting to discontinue this partnership. However, until such time as Ramara is successful in its bid to leave, LSRCA will not only continue to provide the provincially mandated and legislated program and services but will also seek Ramara's financial support to help cover these costs.

Your municipality's role and continued support as a member of LSRCA is very much appreciated and is integral to LSRCA's success in achieving our mission to work with our community to protect and restore Lake Simcoe and its watershed.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at this office.

Sincerely,



Mike Walters
Chief Administrative Officer

copy: LSRCA Board of Directors