

March 7, 2018

Town of St. Marys
175 Queen Street East
P.O Box 998
St. Marys, ON N4X 1B6

Attention: Mayor Al Strathdee and Members of Council

Dear Mayor Strathdee:

Re: Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Budget Approval

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) passed its 2018 Budget during its Feb 22nd Annual General Meeting. No changes were made to the municipal levy portion of the budget from the Draft Budget that was circulated to you in November.

I want to reassure you that the Board of Directors, through your representative, was certainly aware of your concerns in terms of the funding for our Environmental Targets initiative. The Board again reviewed your comments from our September Budget Workshop where you suggested the Targets work was perhaps too aggressive in terms of your Municipality's ability to pay, as well as recent feedback you provided at your Council meeting that reinforced this position. Your representative to the UTRCA, Tony Jackson, has also been very vocal in conveying the Town's concerns.

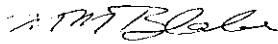
While we are very aware of your concerns, and value your input, the Board of Directors also has to consider the views of its 16 other member municipalities. In addition, municipal funding is required to be fixed proportionally meaning that a levy reduction for any one municipality must be matched by a proportional reduction in funding from every other municipality. In the case of St. Marys, that means that for every dollar of reduction for the Town, the municipal levy in total would be reduced by \$65.

Ultimately, budget approval is determined by a vote. During yesterday's budget vote, three municipalities (including St. Marys) voted against the budget with the remainder in support. While this is perhaps not the outcome you would have preferred, we do appreciate your input and trust that the UTRCA and the Town will continue their long history of cooperation. Our recent coordinated flood response and the avoidance of any significant flood damages in the Town, despite this being the highest ever recorded flow on the North Thames River in St. Marys (records since 1948), demonstrate the effectiveness of our joint efforts in terms of flood control infrastructure and on-the-ground operations. We believe the implementation of the

Environmental Targets Strategic Plan will be equally beneficial to the Town in terms of improved water quality, natural heritage cover, flood protection and enhanced visitation/ tourism.

The UTRCA is always willing to listen to concerns or ideas regarding options to better fund and manage local resources. If you have questions or wish to discuss this further, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Murray Blackie
Chair, UTRCA

cc: Tony Jackson
Brent Kittmer
Ian Wilcox