

# ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS

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*Ontario Conservation Centre*

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Honourable John Yakabuski  
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 6630, Whitney Block  
99 Wellesley Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Yakabuski:

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is a long-standing supporter of having a robust enforcement regime to help safeguard Ontario's natural resources. At the core of this is ensuring we have and retain a sufficient number of experienced Conservation Officers. During the 2018 provincial election, we reached out to the leader of each party with an election questionnaire. In his response to the OFAH, the then-leader of the PC Party Doug Ford committed to increasing the number of Conservation Officers in Ontario. To date, we have seen a concerning lack of progress on this issue. While we recognize the global pandemic has forced the provincial government to refocus its efforts and finances, we also know it will take time to ramp up enforcement capacity. We are seeking a renewed commitment from your Ministry to address the decline in enforcement capacity and to address some of the root causes of attrition.

Thirty years ago, there were approximately 280 Conservation Officers in Ontario, including managers, district investigators, enforcement specialists, and training specialists. Today, that number is less than 200 and only about 160 are front-line, boots-on-the-ground Conservation Officers that an angler or hunter would encounter in the outdoors. This puts Ontario's vast natural resources at serious risk of abuse.

In their recent letter to you, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union identified legitimate concerns about barriers to increasing enforcement capacity. If we are going to reverse the decline in enforcement capacity, we need the government to double-down on its commitment to recruit, operationalize, and retain the best Conservation Officers.

We look forward to discussing this issue with you in greater detail.

Yours in Conservation,

Angelo Lombardo  
Executive Director

AL/jb

cc: Sean Cronsberry, President, Ontario Conservation Officers Association  
Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President, Ontario Public Service Employees Union  
Matt DeMille, OFAH Manager, Fish & Wildlife Services  
Mark Ryckman, OFAH Manager, Policy