

ONTARIO  
**LEGAL  
CONFERENCE** **20  
26**



February 3-6, 2026

## ONTARIO LEGAL CONFERENCE: MUNICIPAL, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Day 1: Thursday, February 5, 2026 | 1:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Day 2: Friday, February 6, 2026 | 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Back by popular demand, this flagship event in the OBA's Municipal, Planning, and Environmental law calendar will provide the insights, advice, and expertise you need to master these evolving legal areas. From recent developments and critical case law to key issues and practice challenges, hear from leading Ontario professionals as they share best practices and updates to help you navigate the critical issues you face daily whether you are in private or public practice.

**Program Chairs:**

**Jonathan Nehmetallah**, McCarthy Tétrault LLP

**Meredith Baker**, TMA Law

**Denisa Mertiri**, Ontario Power Generation

**Matthew Lakatos-Hayward**, Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP

**PLENARY**

**MUNICIPAL and PLANNING  
LAW**

**ENVIRONMENTAL LAW**

### DAY 1 | THURSDAY, February 5, 2026

12:30pm	Inter-Sections Networking Lunch	
1:30pm	<b>Welcome &amp; Opening Remarks</b>	
1:35pm	<b>Your Strategic Guide to Advocacy before the Ontario Land Tribunal</b> A can't-miss opportunity to elevate your practice and get valuable insights directly from the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT), and highly experienced practitioners, on effective advocacy in environmental and municipal/planning law appeals before the OLT.  <b>William Middleton</b> , Vice-Chair, Ontario Land Tribunal <b>Meredith Baker</b> , TMA Law (moderator) <b>Alex Ciccone</b> , Garrod Pickfield LLP (Guelph) <b>Isaac Tang</b> , Borden Ladner Gervais LLP	
2:45 pm	<b>The Expansion of Strong Mayor Powers</b>  More municipalities than ever are grappling with the legal implications of "strong mayor" powers. Unravel the complex problems you're facing in practice, including the "good faith" requirement and how to confidently advise your clients during this changed era of municipal law.  <b>Scott Seabrooke</b> , City of Peterborough	<b>Environmental Case Law Update</b> Ensure you are up-to-date on the most important cases in environmental law from the past year, and equipped with the insights you need to effectively represent your clients.  <b>Ramani Nadarajah</b> , Canadian Environmental Law Association <b>Lauren Wortsman</b> , Aird & Berlis LLP
3:30 pm	Inter-Sections Networking Break	

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3:50 pm	<p><b>Practical Insights for Drafting Heritage Designation By-Laws</b></p> <p>What are the crucial rules and requirements for listing and designating heritage properties? Get practical drafting strategies as our panel of experienced practitioners examine this legal process.</p> <p><b>Eileen P. K. Costello</b>, Aird &amp; Berlis LLP</p>	<p><b>Navigating the Complexities of Environmental Civil Litigation</b></p> <p>Explore key developments and practical guidance for navigating environmental disputes in the civil context, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates to the <i>Rules of Civil Procedure</i> for environmental litigators;</li> <li>• Expert evidence essentials;</li> <li>• Complexities of multi-party disputes; and</li> <li>• Alternative dispute resolution strategies tailored to environmental disputes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Diana Weir</b>, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (moderator)  <b>Rosalind Cooper</b>, Fasken Martineau LLP  <b>Chantelle Cseh</b>, Davies Ward Phillips &amp; Vineberg LLP  <b>Julia E. Schatz</b>, Bennett Jones LLP</p>
4:30 pm	<p><b>Case Law Update: The Latest in Municipal Law</b></p> <p>This ever-popular annual review will bring you up to speed on the latest in municipal case law. Don't miss this opportunity to hear about the most important decisions of the past year and how they apply in your practice.</p> <p><b>Jody Johnson</b>, Regional Municipality of Halton</p>	
5:00 pm	Inter-Sections Networking Reception	

## DAY 2 | FRIDAY, February 6, 2026

9:00 am	<p><b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b></p>	
9:05 am	<p><b>Planning for Stormwater and Flood Risk Management</b></p> <p>Regulators and legal practitioners unpack the evolving landscape of stormwater and flood control management and share insight on navigating complex regulatory requirements while mitigating risk in an era of increasing climate-related challenges. Hear diverse points of view on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Risk and Liability: Legal implications and exposure municipalities face in managing stormwater systems and flood mitigation strategies.</li> <li>• Regulatory and Policy Changes: Recent amendments affecting conservation authorities and their impact on planning and compliance.</li> <li>• Best Practices and Emerging Trends: Innovative approaches for integrating flood risk management into municipal planning frameworks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Kristi M. Ross</b>, Aird &amp; Berlis LLP (moderator)  <b>Christopher Leite</b>, Chief, Emergency Management at Regional Municipality of Halton  <b>Hayley Valleau</b>, Crown Counsel, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources  <b>Eric McGill</b>, Corporate Counsel, South Nation Conservation Authority</p>	
10:05 am	<p><b>The Duty to Consult: Lessons from <i>Galibier Materials Inc. v. Springwater (Township)</i></b></p> <p>Stay ahead on the role and obligations of municipalities in upholding the duty to consult in the land use planning process, and how to integrate the consultation process into planning and regulatory procedures.</p> <p><b>Kailey Sutton</b>, McMillan LLP  <b>Marc Kemerer</b>, McMillan LLP</p>	
10:55 am	<p><b>Impact of Bill 185 on Judicial Review Challenges</b></p> <p>How have judicial review proceedings been affected by the sweeping changes in Bill 185, <i>Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024</i>? Sharpen your legal toolkit on appeals rights respecting zoning by-law and official plan amendments with this session.</p> <p><b>Alice Mihailescu</b>, Dentons Canada LLP</p>	<p><b>Director and Officer Liability</b></p> <p>In today's evolving regulatory landscape, directors and officers face increasing personal exposure to liability in the area of environmental compliance. Environmental law contraventions can have devastating consequences, including lawsuits, penalties and fines, and even imprisonment.</p> <p>Get critical insights into:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory duties to actively prevent corporate environmental transgressions;</li> <li>• Potential consequences following adverse environmental events; and</li> <li>• Proactive measures to ensure environmental law compliance and safeguard against liability.</li> </ul> <p><b>Paul McCulloch</b>, Crown Counsel, Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks  <b>Talia Gordner</b>, McMillan LLP</p>
11:35 am	Inter-Sections Networking Break	
11:55 am	<p><b>Case Law Update: The Latest in Expropriation Law</b></p> <p>Don't miss your essential review of recent expropriation law decisions and current trends, and what they mean for your clients.</p> <p><b>Sarah Spitz</b>, Rayman Harris LLP  <b>Irene Wong</b>, Scargall Owen-King LLP</p>	<p><b>Environmental Insurance: Navigating Pollution Exclusions and the Duty to Defend</b></p> <p>Environmental liability continues to pose complex challenges for insurers, municipalities, and businesses. Take a deep dive into the critical issues surrounding environmental insurance coverage, with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope and interpretation of pollution exclusion clauses, and the implications for coverage disputes.</li> <li>• Duty to Defend: Recent case law and evolving standards governing insurers' obligations to defend environmental claims.</li> <li>• Strategic Risk Management: How to draft and negotiate policy language to minimize uncertainty and litigation risk.</li> <li>• How climate change is influencing the environmental insurance landscape.</li> </ul> <p><b>Gabrielle Kramer</b>, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP  <b>Joyce Tam</b>, Thomas Gold Pettingill LLP</p>
12:35 pm	Inter-Sections Networking Lunch	
1:45 pm	<p><b>Keynotes Address</b>  <b>Leo F. Longo</b>, Aird and Berlis LLP</p>	<p><b>Keynote Address</b>  <b>Stanley D. Berger</b>, Barrister &amp; Solicitor</p>
2:10 pm	<p><b>Making Sense of Major Changes to Land Use Planning</b></p> <p>Ontario is undergoing an unprecedented volume of planning and land use reform. Walk away with practical advice on how to best protect your clients' interests in our shifting planning landscape as we unpack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bill 60, <i>Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act</i>, 2025</li> <li>• Bill 5, <i>Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act</i>, 2025</li> <li>• Bill 17, <i>Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act</i>, 2025</li> <li>• Bill 185, <i>Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act</i>, 2024</li> <li>• Changes to the <i>Development Charges Act</i> regime</li> <li>• Changes to the community benefits charges regime</li> </ul> <p><b>Baiqing Luo</b>, Legal Counsel, Planning &amp; Development Law, City of Mississauga  <b>Raj Kehar</b>, WeirFoulds LLP  <b>Jean-Simon Schoenholz</b>, Norton Rose Fulbright Canada LLP / S.E.N.C.R.L., s.r.l.</p>	<p><b>Federal vs. Ontario Environmental Prosecutions: Setting a Course through Jurisdictional Nuances</b></p> <p>Environmental prosecutions can have wide-ranging consequences and, depending on the regulator, can have their own jurisdictional nuances. Delve into the legislative, enforcement, and nuances between prosecutorial approaches that arise when environmental offences are prosecuted under different levels of government.</p> <p><b>Matthew Lakatos-Hayward</b>, Cassels Brock &amp; Blackwell LLP (moderator)  <b>Dina Awad</b>, Dentons Canada LLP  <b>Michael Finley</b>, Gowling WLG</p>

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3:00 pm	<p><b>Case Law Update: The Latest in Planning Law</b>  This exceptional annual review will bring you up to speed on the latest in planning case law. Don't miss this opportunity to hear about the most important decisions of the past year.</p> <p><b>Ian Flett</b>, Ian Flett Professional Corporation</p>	<p><b>Landfill Law and Policy: New Pressures, Old Problems</b>  Ontario's landfill landscape is under increasing pressure. With the province projected to run out of landfill capacity within the next decade, the government has begun fast-tracking controversial projects, sparking legal, political, and environmental policy debates across the province.</p> <p>Hear perspectives on the legal and regulatory challenges associated with siting, reopening, and expanding landfills, and gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between environmental law, municipal planning, and provincial policy on landfills.</p> <p><b>Jessica Boily</b>, Gowling WLG  <b>Blair Shoniker</b>, GHD Limited</p>
3:30 pm	Program Concludes	

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