# MNR won't support quarry license

## A ministry official backs an earlier MOE call for more water tests prior to license approval

BY MICHAEL-ALLAN MARION
*Ontario Farmer*

Carlisle - Opponents of a bid by multinational firm St. Marys Cement to start a quarry in a farming area near Carlisle are buoyed by statements from two provincial ministries that the company should not be given a license until it has shown its operations will not harm area water features.

According to the statements, first from the Ministry of the Environment, and now from the Ministry of Natural Resources, say the company must show that extraction activities from its proposed Flamborough Quarry on 11th Concession Road near Milburough Line will not harm area wells, wetlands or surface streams.

They contradict the company's intention of first obtaining a license from Natural Resources, then performing water tests to get a pumping permit from the environment ministry.

The MOE made the statement nearly nine months ago when it rejected an initial test performed by a consultant for St. Marys as being unreliable and ordered a retesting. The company refused, and filed for its permit instead.

Then in a seven-page letter sent a month ago to the company, Natural Resources official Diane Schwier concluded "the ministry is not in a position to support the license at this time."

She wrote that St. Marys must provide more information on wildlife, forests, wetlands, regulations of the Greenbelt Act, site rehabilitation and water.

Schwier further wrote that more information on the company's proposed groundwater recirculation system was particularly essential, but the company has no pump test with proper results to show it would work.

"Ministry staff suggests that such a demonstration is critical to license approval, and recommends that testing be complete. Staff would like the opportunity to be in attendance when the test is carried out."

Another letter from the Environment Ministry to Natural Resources notes the application lacks even a conceptual design for a groundwater system, adding "with no field testing, we could not support issuance of a license."

THE ACTIONS of the two ministries buttress the case of a grassroots group called Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment. The group, which has about 1,300 members, including 250 farmers, has concentrated from the beginning on the potential adverse effect of a quarry operation on water supplies for farms in the area and rural residential wells.

"We've been consistent all along in flagging this as a key issue, and we now have two ministries saying the same thing," chairman Graham Flint said in an interview. "It's frustrating that this continues to drag on without a firm resolution."

Flint noted the company's MOE license to do pump testing has run out. "They will have to reapply," he said. "They're back at the starting gate."

St. Marys vice-president John Moroz defends the company's position in the latest situation in an e-mail sent to the media that has been widely circulated.

"St. Marys remains committed to doing the right thing to address agency and community concerns," the e-mail says.

"Through the process, we will identify gaps in understanding and information, and make decisions on how to close those gaps at that time. It is too early to make a decision on another pump test until we have had an opportunity to get further into the process."


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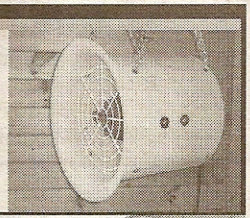

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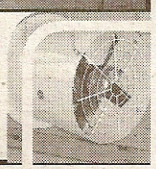

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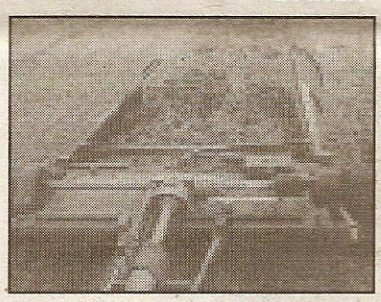

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