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## Flamborough quarry 'the right thing'

St. Marys Cement 'assessing legal options' due to province's 'grave error'

**JOHN MOROZ**  
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Ontario consumes an average of 170 million tonnes of aggregate -- stone, sand and gravel -- annually, and this demand is growing. Due to limitations in supply and the rising cost of transportation over longer and longer distances, the cost of aggregate has been rising at 10 to 15 per cent per year. And much of this cost is being borne by taxpayers.

Last Tuesday, St. Marys Cement learned of the government's decision to issue a "minister's zoning order" which, if allowed to stand, abruptly and permanently terminates our efforts to establish an aggregates quarry in Flamborough.

St. Marys is surprised and disappointed by this unprecedented decision, and we believe the Ontario government has made a grave error.

In 2006, St. Marys purchased this site and entered in good faith into a lengthy and costly approval process with the understanding that all parties involved -- citizens, municipalities and the province -- would follow this standard process. Our application was making its way through the rigorous provincially and municipally mandated processes, processes that some have described as the toughest in the world, and we have worked diligently and patiently throughout with all of the agencies involved in the review of this complex project.

Surely, review of aggregate applications must rely on science and not on perception.

In 2008, when Hamilton Public Health identified concerns with the proposed groundwater testing, St. Marys resolved all of the detailed concerns identified by the health unit, and we were issued a test permit by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). There have been no health impacts identified by the qualified, independent experts retained by us as a result of any activities carried out on our site. St. Marys is in ongoing talks with the MOE and other stakeholders, including the Hamilton Public Health Unit and the community group FORCE, about further groundwater testing on the site.

We are confident that any remaining concerns about the potential impacts a quarry may have on groundwater could be resolved through the existing regulatory process. More than 25 provincial and federal acts govern environmental protection at aggregate sites. These include protection of water resources.

The proposed Flamborough quarry aligns with provincial policy designed to protect the environment while ensuring access to high-quality aggregates, including: the Provincial Policy Statement, Greenbelt Plan, Places to Grow Program and the Clean Water Act.

Extraction at the proposed Flamborough Quarry will not occur in areas of provincially significant wetlands, areas affecting provincially significant plant species, or significant woodlands and important wildlife habitat.

In fact, some have suggested that the province moved in this arbitrary and high-handed manner precisely because, based on the technical merits and provincial policy alignment, the Flamborough quarry would have ultimately been approved.

Aggregate is literally the building blocks of our communities and the foundation for our roads, homes, schools, hospitals and other necessary infrastructure. The responsibility to provide this vital material to Ontarians -- in a manner that is both environmentally and economically responsible -- is one that St. Marys has taken very seriously for the more than 90 years we have been in business in this province.

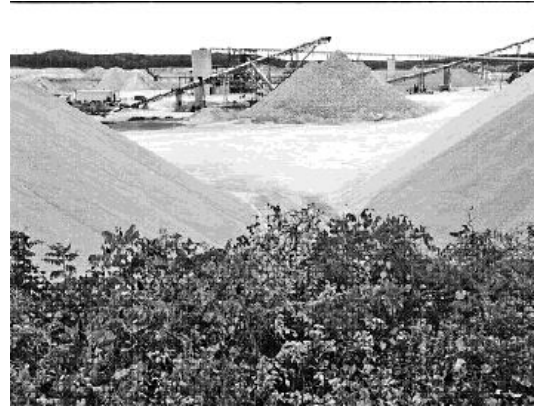
St. Marys has invested hundreds of millions of dollars and employed hundreds of men and women in Ontario and the communities where we operate with the understanding that we are conducting business within a regulatory framework that is clear and reasonable.

Extracting aggregate close-to-market remains the most environmentally responsible solution, and government policies support mineral aggregate extraction in rural areas that are in close proximity to regions experiencing growth. We have always believed that providing high-quality aggregate close to market, to fuel the expansion of Ontario's economy, while creating jobs and investment in Hamilton, was and is the right thing to do.

We have consistently taken any concerns that have been raised very seriously and have treated the community and all stakeholders with consideration and respect in all our communications.

St. Marys is assessing various legal options to obtain justice in this situation. We believe that approval of the Flamborough quarry serves the interests of the community, taxpayers across the province, and the natural environment. We are committed to doing the right thing.

John Moroz is vice-president and general manager of St. Marys Cement, CBM.



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