



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 5, 2009

MOE SAYS “READ MY LIPS” AND STANDS UP TO PROTECT COMMUNITY’S WATER

Decision to Redo Water Tests Stands or Permit will be Revoked

Today, Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment (FORCE) learned that the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) has set a March 20, 2009 deadline for revoking the Permit to Take Water (PTTW) issued to St Marys Cement for testing related to its proposed Flamborough quarry. The ministry has also defended its decision to require the company to redo baseline pump tests. The MOE sent a letter to St Marys Cement correcting the record from statements made in the company’s January 22, 2009 letter to the ministry, where the company questioned the purposes for the test and alleged that the Director’s decision was inconsistent with ministry staff technical reviews. If the company does not change its position about carrying out further testing asked for by the MOE, the PTTW will be revoked.

“MOE has basically told St Marys Cement to ‘read my lips’,” said Graham Flint, FORCE Chair and Spokesperson. “We commend MOE for standing up to the cement giant and defending the ministry decision and our water. MOE is saying the company must demonstrate on-site that its proposed quarry and mitigation system will protect the quality and quantity of both groundwater and surface water for our community.”

The integrity and completeness of hydro-geological assessments by St Marys Cement continue to be questioned at many levels. Hamilton Public Health Services (PHS) again expressed its public health concerns regarding the operation of a proposed limestone quarry in a letter from the Medical Officer of Health to MNR dated February 10, 2009. It noted potential risk for adverse impacts upon groundwater quantity and quality that could be caused by the quarry, given its proposed size, and asked MNR to consult with the Ministry of the Environment regarding the completeness of the hydro-geological reports that may have accompanied the St Marys Cement application. It is PHS’s view that “...significantly more work be done to ascertain the groundwater risks and the feasibility of the adaptive management plan...”.

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The tough MOE position quickly followed on the heels of a Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) decision, on March 3, 2009, which found the St Marys Cement aggregate license application to be “complete” and authorized the company to move onto public and agency notification and consultation stages.

MOE originally informed St Marys Cement on October 30, 2008 that its Phase 1 pump test conducted during July 2008 generated unacceptable data results. Excessive rainfall had occurred before, during and after the pumping test. This compromised the results of surface and groundwater monitoring and made interpretation of data challenging. Because of the significance of future decisions regarding quarry dewatering and mitigation, MOE told the company that the pump test must be repeated before testing of the proposed mitigation system in subsequent phases under the PTTW would be authorized.

St Marys Cement has repeatedly indicated that it would successfully demonstrate its proposed mitigation system on-site, before adding it as a component to its aggregate license application. A direct appeal and commitment was made by the company to community residents in its fall 2007 Newsletter #6.

“St Marys Cement has indicated so far that it does not intend to redo the pump test. If the PTTW is revoked, no mitigation system of any kind will have been tested on the site,” noted Flint. “The company will have offered no proven, viable plan to decision-makers to demonstrate that it can protect our drinking water, streams and wetlands. For this reason, and many more, we will be asking governments to ‘read our lips’ and stop the quarry.”

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Visit our website: www.StopTheQuarry.ca

Attachments: MOE March 5 and Hamilton Public Health Feb 10 Letters