

## Reinstate quarry fees: McCarthy

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Flamborough councillor Margaret McCarthy wants to make sure that pit and quarry operators in Ontario have all the incentives they need to ensure speedy rehabilitation of pits and quarry lands. She's pushing for the reinstatement of security deposits from the aggregate industry to guarantee that rehabilitation work is done and she's asking Hamilton city council for support.

McCarthy presented a notice of motion at last Wednesday's council meeting proposing the return of security deposits, which were abandoned about 10 years ago. According to her motion, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) ordered the liquidation of the deposits by The Ontario Aggregate Resources Corporation (TOARC). The MNR also promised, in the summer of 2006, to examine the merits of a rehabilitation incentive system, including reintroduction of the security deposits, within two years.

But Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association (OSSGA) president Carol Hochu disputes the need for reinstatement of the deposits, noting that the individual site security deposit funds were replaced by a provincial fund that is available to rehabilitate sites that fail to meet rehabilitation requirements.

Eleven years after the abandonment of the deposit system, areas where the Aggregate Resources Act (ARA) applies have been expanded, Hochu said. Licence fees that support the provincial program have increased and "there are a number of positive trends in rehabilitation and enforcement."

In her motion, McCarthy notes that although progressive and final rehabilitation is required by the ARA, only about half of the province's disturbed lands in pits and quarries is being rehabilitated. She wants the city to recommend to the MNR that the security deposits be reinstated and that the role of the deposits for pit and quarry rehabilitation be reviewed. She also wants the ministry to review the role of TOARC and its owner, the OSSGA, to determine the effectiveness of the two groups in the promotion of rehabilitation. She says the goal of her motion is to improve the status of rehabilitation in Hamilton and across the province.

Hochu said that charts prepared by the Aurora district office of the MNR show that the amount of area being rehabilitated has more than doubled in recent years. She also said it's a mistake to suggest that without the security fund, there is no incentive to rehabilitate. "If this were actually true, we wouldn't have the great

examples of innovative and good rehabilitation that exist in Ontario."

Pointing out that "Hamilton and Halton have some of the best examples of world class rehabilitation in the province," she invited people to visit the website at [http://www.conservationhamilton.ca/corporate/news/3215\\_332.asp](http://www.conservationhamilton.ca/corporate/news/3215_332.asp) which details the reopening of the Fletcher's Creek ecological preserve in northern Flamborough with funds from TOARC and other industry partners.

The OSSGA president also said that all the points raised in McCarthy's motion are the same as those that underwent a comprehensive review under the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) a couple of years ago. The results of the review were accepted by the ECO (Environmental Commissioner of Ontario) and the fundamentals of the existing legislation were found to be sound, she reported.

Hamilton council will address McCarthy's motion at a meeting next Wednesday (February 27).



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