



Province declares interest in quarry land

St Marys considers its options

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One year after the provincial government issued a zoning freeze on a proposed quarry site in north Flamborough, Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing declared a provincial interest in the matter, posing another potential challenge for St Marys Cement and its plans to build a 150-hectare quarry.

The announcement was delivered at a special press conference at the constituency office of Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale MPP Ted McMeekin Thursday morning in Waterdown.

"I am pleased to report to all of you that just after 6 p.m. last night, I received word from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that the Minister had issued a letter of provincial interest with respect to the St. Marys quarry," said McMeekin.

The letter of provincial interest, a highly unusual step taken by Minister Rick Bartolucci, speaks to the Ontario government's concerns surrounding the aggregate company's plans for a quarry and its potential impacts on the community.

Some of the issues of concern, listed by McMeekin, included protecting ecological systems such as the area's natural features and functions, efficient use and conservation of water, the public's health and safety and appropriate location of growth and development on the proposed site, located at the 11th Concession Road East and Milborough Line.

Last April, the provincial government invoked a Ministerial Zoning Order on the property. St Marys Cement subsequently appealed the order at the Ontario Municipal Board. Thursday's announcement speaks to the order and further strengthens the government's position on the quarry.

"The government has said, 'We don't want you to reverse the Ministerial Zoning Order,'" said McMeekin.

"The issuance of a letter of provincial interest is a signal to the Ontario Municipal Board that, notwithstanding any decision they make, the cabinet certainly of this government will hold the right to make a final decision," he added.

"We are surprised and disappointed by the government of Ontario's decision to declare a provincial interest in the lands proposed for the Flamborough Quarry," said St Marys Cement in a statement issued Thursday afternoon.

"St Marys was preparing for a review of the Minister's Zoning Order by the Ontario Municipal Board, and we are confident that the OMB would find that the MZO should be revoked and the quarry application, on its strong merits, should proceed.



MPP Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale) and FORCE chair, Graham Flint, address reporters at a special announcement regarding Ontario's decision to declare a provincial interest in the proposed Flamborough Quarry land. Photo by Catherine O'Hara • Review

“St Marys can only conclude that the province took this heavy-handed step because it became convinced we would prevail at the OMB,” the company added.

Graham Flint, chair of the advocacy group FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment) that opposes St Marys Cement’s proposed Flamborough Quarry, was in attendance and was pleased to hear the government’s announcement.

But he reminded the media at the Thursday morning press conference that the group’s fight to quash the aggregate business’s plans is not over. Even after the province issued the order last spring,

“St Marys hasn’t gone away,” said Flint. “They haven’t listened to the community; they haven’t listened to the sciences and the facts; they haven’t listened to all the stakeholders that have made their position clear through science and fact-based evidence, and continue to fight on.”

Added Ward 15 councillor Judi Partridge: “St Marys has not given up.”

Grateful for the support FORCE has received from the community and government representatives across all levels of government, the group’s chairperson is hopeful the provincial interest letter issued this week will send a strong message to St Marys.

“This is the clearest possible signal that can be sent to St Marys and to the Ontario Municipal Board,” said McMeekin.

A pre-hearing into St Mary’s appeal of the MZO took place earlier this month. A two-week hearing is tentatively scheduled for late September. But in a statement by St Marys following the announcement, the company acknowledged that it is considering its options.



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