



Quarry move a 'seat saver': Hudak

Kevin Werner • Metroland West Media Group

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Ontario Progressive Conservative leader Tim Hudak accused the Liberals of trying to save Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale Liberal MPP Ted McMeekin's political future by intervening in the Mountsberg quarry controversy.

"This looks like a seat saver," said Hudak. "It's important we respect the process that is under way through the OMB (Ontario Municipal Board)."

At a press conference in April, McMeekin announced that the Liberals will tap into a rarely-used power to prevent St Marys Cement from developing a quarry in northeast Flamborough.

The Liberal government had established a planning freeze on the surrounding land in April 2010. The Liberals this time issued a stronger declaration – even as the planning issue is before the OMB – calling the quarry a provincial "interest."

St Marys has challenged the zoning freeze imposed on the quarry site at the 11th Concession Road East near Milborough Line. The decision by the Liberals sends a "signal" to the OMB and St Marys that the provincial government can overrule any OMB decision that's made, said McMeekin.

"The cabinet reserves the right to make the final decision," said McMeekin. "(The province) has gone from a very interested party to an active advocate. So we are making a pretty strong statement."

However, the Liberal government's decision can only be enforced if the Liberals remain in power. Hudak said if his party wins the provincial election Oct. 6, he wouldn't allow his government to interfere in any OMB decision.

"We need the OMB to make its decisions based on good planning," he said. "If the province truly had a provincial interest, it would save people a lot of time and a lot of money."

Hudak has personally supported CHCH television broadcaster Donna Skelly as the Tory candidate to unseat McMeekin in this fall's provincial election. Former Tory candidate Chris Corrigan withdrew his nomination to allow Skelly to become the candidate, said Tory party officials.

A preliminary hearing was held Apr. 29 at the McMaster University Centre on Main Street.

Tentative dates for the OMB hearing have been scheduled beginning late September and could continue for three weeks.

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