

Quarry application faces hurdles

The environment ministry is insisting that earlier groundwater tests be redone

BY MICHAEL-ALLAN MARION
Ontario Farmer

Carlisle - A controversial bid by St Marys Cement for a license to install a limestone quarry in a farming area north of Carlisle is running into more obstacles from some public agencies and a grassroots group of farmers and residents opposed to the project.

The environment ministry is insisting in a letter on March 5 to St Marys that the company must undertake a new set of groundwater pumping tests because the results of an earlier series were ruled unreliable. The company had recently balked at the retest and proceeded with its quarry licence application to the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Also in a March 3 letter, MNR officials declared the company's application complete and cleared St Marys to move on to the next phase of notification with agencies and public consultations in a four-year-old bid to open the Flamborough Quarry on 11th Concession near Milborough Line.

But the environment ministry warned the multinational aggregates firm in its letter two days later that it must do the tests by March 20, or its water taking permit allowing the tests will be revoked.

That ministry's position is backed up by Hamilton Public

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— John Moroz

Health Services, which has broadened earlier stated concerns about the quarry applications.

In a second letter, Hamilton medical officer of health Elizabeth Richardson restated that agency's concerns and requested the company ensure with MOE that its results from testing are complete and can support a plan to manage potential safety impacts on ground and surface water from the operations of such a large quarry.

"There is significantly more work to be done to ascertain the groundwater risks and the feasibility of the groundwater adaptive management plan," Dr. Richardson wrote.

Graham Flint, chairman of Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment, which has more than 1,200 supporters in the area, including about 200 farmers, said "the MOE has basically told St Marys Cement to 'read my lips.'"

He praised the ministry and Hamilton Public Health Services for "standing up to the cement giant" and defending regulations and processes to

safeguard water.

Meanwhile, St Marys says it is moving forward to the next stage of the process on the strength of MNR's announcement that the application is ready.

"The requirement for notification and consultation are established by provincial regulations, and are designed to ensure that the public have access to information about the project," company president John Moroz said in a statement.

"We recognize the community's interest in this application, and we will continue to work co-operatively with local residents throughout the process."

Moroz said the company will begin a 45-day process during the next week to posting its plans, complete with all documents for public inspection and comment. They will be posted on the web site www.flamboroughquarry.ca.

St Marys has acquired and assembled the land of two disused farms on 11th Concession near Milborough Line where it hopes to quarry high-quality limestone for its products. The proposed area is close to the boundaries of Hamilton (which includes Flamborough) and the municipalities of Burlington and Milton in Halton Region.

It is also in the middle of an agricultural area that includes equestrian breeding stables, livestock operations, greenhouses and some cash cropping.

Flint said FORCE will continue to oppose the application every step of the way.

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