

For Immediate Release  
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## **McGUINTY GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR AGGREGATE OPERATIONS**

*Expanded Designations And Revised Fee Structure Will Support Compliance And Enforcement*

TORONTO — The Ontario government is strengthening environmental protection by regulating more land under the Aggregate Resources Act and by increasing industry fees to enhance rehabilitation and compliance, Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay announced today.

“Designating new areas will mean that most significant aggregate resource production areas in Ontario will be subject to the act,” said Ramsay. “This will level the playing field, avoid unfair competition among aggregate operations and help protect the environment.”

Effective January 1, 2007, the act will be extended to private land in southern Ontario and parts of central and northern Ontario not currently covered by the act – including all of Muskoka and Parry Sound districts and Haliburton County; and parts of Algoma, Nipissing, Sudbury, Manitoulin and Thunder Bay districts as well as parts of Renfrew, Peterborough, Hastings, Frontenac, and Lennox and Addington counties. Most private land in southern Ontario and all Crown land is already regulated.

“The industry has always been supportive of expanding land designations and providing adequate funding for the Ministry of Natural Resources to properly administer the aggregate program,” said Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association Greg Sweetnam.

The province is also increasing the annual fee and minimum royalty rate for aggregate operators. The extra revenue generated will be used to enhance rehabilitation for pits and quarries, and allow the strengthening of compliance through the hiring of additional enforcement officers. The royalty increase will also ensure the province receives a fair return for the use of aggregate from Crown land. In addition, municipalities will see increased funding from aggregate operations.

“This is a positive step forward for rural municipalities in Ontario,” said Association of Municipalities of Ontario President Doug Reycraft. “Municipal governments need help to offset the cost of wear and tear on local roads and bridges that come from aggregate extraction. Today’s announcement will help us maintain the roads that transport this important resource.”

Aggregates are any combination of sand, gravel, or crushed stone, and are essential for construction and such manufactured products as glass and paint. The Aggregate Resources Act provides for the management of aggregate resources, regulates aggregate operations, requires the rehabilitation of land where aggregate has been extracted and minimizes the environmental effect of operations.

Regulating more land under the Aggregate Resources Act is just one way the McGuinty government is strengthening environmental protection. Other initiatives include:

- Launching Ontario’s first biodiversity strategy to protect the province’s plants and wildlife and the habitats that support them

- Working with partners and government agencies to restore and protect the health of the Great Lakes and their watersheds
- Protecting more than 1.8 million acres of greenspace in the Greenbelt, providing safe habitat for 66 species at risk.

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Note: See attached map of designated areas.

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