

Quarry opponents vow to fight on as MNR opens consultations

Opponents predict that approval of the massive quarry would change the rural area forever

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Carlisle - Opponents are girding for a protracted political battle against a quarry that St Marys Cement wants to install in a farming area outside Carlisle, now that the Ministry of Natural Resources has said the international firm's license application is ready to be put formally to the public.

"If approved, this proposal will change our communities forever," Graham Flint, chairman of the grassroots group Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment, told about 500 residents from Carlisle, the surrounding area and over into Milton, during a rally called after MNR declared the application complete.

That decision started the public process that could take up to five years before approval may be granted.

"We can't let that happen,"

Flint told the gathering. "We must join together and stop the quarry."

FORCE has been fighting for years in the early stages of a proposal, first by one company, then St Marys to start its proposed Flamborough Quarry in a cracked limestone formation on 11th Concession northeast of Carlisle, near the boundary between the Flamborough section of Hamilton and the town of Milton in Halton Region.

The group, which claims more than 1,300 supporters, including about 150 farmers, argued that the application was deficient because it did not have the results of water testing that St Marys had done, but which the Ministry of the Environment rejected as unreliable and ordered another sets of tests, which the company refused to do.

The company argued they were not really necessary at this stage.

The group called the rally after the MNR suddenly declared on April 3 its decision to let the application proceed through the process anyway.

Flint told residents they must get ready for a lengthy process

that will involve public information meetings, a hearing before a joint Ontario Municipal Board/Environmental Assessment Board panel, and possible appeals by either side.

The first signpost is a 45-day notification period that began on April 3 and will end on May 21, in which members of the public, governments and agencies must send formal letters of objection to St Marys and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Only objections received during this time period will be considered formal objections. The letters must state the reasons for the objection. It is necessary to send objections to both places.

- The company's address - St Marys Cement Inc. (Canada), 55 Industrial Street, 4th Floor, Toronto, ON, M4G 3W9. The objection can also be emailed to communityinfo@stmaryscbm.com.

- The minister's address is MNR Guelph District Office, 1 Stone Road West, Guelph, ON, N1G 4Y2. Email address is MNRFQA@ontario.ca

There also is a second separate process for collecting aggregate

license comments, through the EBR (Environmental Bill of Rights) Registry. The comments collected here are fed into the provincial government ministries through the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario's office.

The EBR web site address and the St Marys Quarry application item number are: www.ebr.gov.on.ca Item # 010-6227. To submit comments, follow the web site's instructions.

In the next stage of the process, the company has two years to address any objections that have been submitted by the public and agencies and try to have them withdrawn.

St. Marys will then submit all the documentation to the MNR, which will either approve the licence, refuse to issue a licence, or refer the application to the Ontario Municipal Board.

While the meeting was proceeding, Hamilton city council unanimously passed a resolution from Coun. Margaret McCarthy opposing the application.

A similar resolution was expected to be approved by Milton council this week. Local federations of agriculture have also

stated their opposition.

With the recent release by St Marys of information for its application, the scope of the massive industrial open pit mine is becoming clearer. Here are some highlights:

- Onsite operations are planned six days a week, Monday through Saturday.
- Onsite activities would start at 7 a.m. and continue until 7 p.m. on weekdays, and until noon on Saturdays.
- At full blast, the quarry would be visited by 820 trucks or 1,640 passes per day, which works out to between two and three passes per minute, or one every 26 seconds.
- About three million tonnes would be removed per year, creating an average excavation depth of 32 metres (100 feet), over an area of 164 acres.
- The company is proposing to use an untested, theoretical groundwater mitigation system to address the acknowledged impact on groundwater. The system will be required to pump 90 million litres of water per day for the life of the project.