

Now's time to comment on plan for huge quarry

Eric McGuinness
The Hamilton Spectator

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St. Marys Cement is starting the countdown to an almost-inevitable provincial public hearing on its controversial plan for a huge limestone quarry northeast of Carlisle.

A notice in today's Spectator announces the beginning of a 45-day period for individuals, organizations and public bodies to comment on the company's application for an aggregate licence from the Ministry of Natural Resources.

If the company cannot resolve objections raised at a public meeting April 27 or in writing before May 21, and if the City of Hamilton doesn't approve a rezoning application, the matter will go eventually to a joint panel of the Ontario Municipal Board and the Environmental Review Tribunal.

Melanie Horton, speaking for St. Marys, said yesterday: "Over the past couple of years, St. Marys has engaged the community in a number of community forums and open houses in an effort to design a quarry that will deliver maximum benefit to Hamilton and the GTA, while minimizing the impact on the local community.

"We are pleased to share the details of our licence application and we look forward to continuing our dialogue with the community at the upcoming information session."

The citizens' antiquarry group FORCE, seeing itself in a David-and-Goliath battle with the Canadian subsidiary of Brazilian cement giant Votorantim, is recruiting a powerhouse panel of medical and environmental experts to bolster its case against St. Marys.

Signed up so far:

- * Monte Hummel, president emeritus of World Wildlife Fund Canada.
- * Gail Krantzberg, director of the Dofasco Centre for Engineering and Public Policy at McMaster University.
- * Jacques Gerin, former federal deputy minister of environment, associate deputy minister of northern affairs and chair of a panel on the ecological integrity of Canada's national parks.
- * Dr. Alba DiCenso, professor in McMaster's department of clinical epidemiology and biostatistics and the school of nursing.

FORCE chair Graham Flint says: "Their fields of expertise dovetail with key objections in our community case against the proposed open pit mine. Collectively, we are determined to protect the environment, water and public health in this part of Ontario's Greenbelt."

Hamilton's public health services department has raised concerns about the risk to underground water supplying the Carlisle area. Halton's medical officer of health, Dr. Bob Nosal, recently wrote to the natural resources ministry expressing similar worries about well water across the regional boundary.

East Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy will ask Hamilton council to oppose St. Marys' application at a meeting April 15. She is hoping for a unanimous vote.

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NEED TO KNOW

Public meeting

When: 4-9 p.m. April 27

Where: Legion Hall, 79 Hamilton St. N.,

Waterdown

More info: flamboroughquarry.ca and stopthequarry.ca