

THE HALTON COMPASS

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MOE now objects to St Marys' application

BY DON REDMOND

In perhaps the most damning of indictments thus far, the Ministry of Environment has now objected to the St. Mary's quarry application, presently sitting in the Ministry of Natural Resources.

After Hamilton, Milton, Halton and Burlington had all passed motions asking that the application be halted by the MNR, the MOE itself

filed a letter of objection to the application within the 45-day timeframe set up for comments.

The letter virtually pits one Provincial ministry against another in the battle over the application that would see a quarry built on the Campbellville-Flamborough border - although there are no early indicators that the MNR was going to okay the application.

However, since the MNR has not turned down

a quarry application since 2000 - although six were withdrawn by the companies themselves - Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy was thrilled to see the MOE onside with her five-year fight.

"When we're talking about a ministry (the MOE) that's been notoriously liberal with permits, particularly in Halton, standing back and objecting

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to this, that's very very substantive," she told the Compass.

"In terms of awareness on all levels, I've never seen anything like this on one single application," she admitted.

"And it's nice to see the MOE is aligned with our thoughts on this one."

In a May 21st letter to the MNR, Carl Slater, a Technical Support Manager for the MOE branch in Hamilton, objected to the St Marys' application four separate times in the course of a three-page letter.

Noting that the groundwater recirculation equipment testing was shortlived, comprised of just one session instead of four, Slater noted, "This approach does not provide enough evidence to conclude that there will not be unacceptable impacts and therefore we cannot support a quarry licence."

Noting that the surface water tests were also insufficient, Slater added, "we cannot support a quarry licence in the absence of field

surface water impact test results."

Suggesting that St Marys' hydrologists were using a theoretical approach to groundwater circulation, rather than actual physical tests, Slater noted, "This theoretical approach, particularly for an undefined (groundwater recirculation system), does not provide adequate evidence to conclude that there will not be unacceptable impacts and thus we cannot support a quarry licence."

Again, in his concluding comments, Slater again pointed to a lack of GRS results and said one more time, his ministry "could not support the issuance of a letter."

The MOE letter followed similar letters from Hamilton's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Elizabeth Richardson and Tim McCabe, Hamilton's general Manager of Planning and Economic Development sent one day earlier.

Halton's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Bob Nosal, had already sent his letter of objection to the MNR late in April.