

Halton Compass
May 31, 2007
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ST. MARYS WATER-TAKING PERMIT STILL ON HOLD

Despite an anticipated deadline of last November, which was then pushed to February and then late-March, the Ministry of the Environment is still researching the water-taking permit that was applied for last fall by St. Marys.

The delays are unlikely to be a surprise to either St. Marys, the applicant for a 96-hectare quarry proposal at the corner of 11th Concession Road East and Milborough Townline, or quarry opponents Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy and anti-quarry group FORCE.

St. Marys has asked for a water-taking permit that would use 12.7 million litres out of the ground daily to prove its untested water recirculation program is sufficient to keep water levels in the local community, including Campbellville, at their present levels.

However, that amount of water translates into 8,800 litres/minute, well above the present levels allowed in nearby Carlisle, set at a mandated maximum of just 650 litres/minutes.

Not too surprisingly, the MOE received a flood of letters regarding the water-taking permit application – over 600 in total, almost all of which were in opposition.

The biggest concern is that St. Marys is asking to incorporate ground-water recirculation equipment that has never been used on a surface similar to the fractured limestone it would be penetrating on this site.

In a newsletter to her constituents and fellow Hamilton councillors, McCarthy asked, “how can any level of government or agency (the MOE) contemplate allowing Flamborough to be used as a guinea pig for the testing ground of unsupported theories? It is unfathomable.”

The MOE would seem to agree – by only with the potential of negative impact on the local water supply. Paul Odom, a supervisor of water resources for the MOE and the person reviewing the application, expressed similar concerns about working on the fractured limestone in an April letter to St. Marys project manager Bill Marquardt. However, he added that “any impact occurring from the test, were the test to be approved, to be the liability of St. Marys.”

Still, it would seem any potential approval for the permit is a long way off as the MOE has handed St. Marys dozens of technical questions regarding their ground-water recirculation program – all of which are still being waited upon for answers.