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THE HALTON COMPASS

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MNR says no go to St Marys... for now

BY DON REDMOND

To opponents of the St Marys' quarry application on the Flamborough-Campbellville border, it was a battle won.

But there's still a war to be fought.

Last week, the Ministry of Natural Resource declined the application, saying St Marys still had a lot of work to do, particularly with groundwater recirculation testing, before they'd look at it again.

To Graham Flint, chair of anti-quarry group FORCE (Friends of the Rural Community and the Environment), it was a victory but not a complete one.

"This is what needed to happen," Flint told the Compass. "This is the MNR stepping up and standing in line with what everyone is saying, from health officials right through to the Ministry of the Environment."

However, he was quick to note the fight would continue.

"We're considering this another round that was won but the (application) process continues to inch forward," he said. "It was a good decision (from the MNR) but there was no finality to it," meaning simply the application is still in play.

The thrust of the seven-page refusal letter from the MNR to St Marys dealt with water issues with the ministry saying the company still have not proved that they can operate a quarry on the 11th Concession East-Milborough Townline site without harming local well-water, surface streams and wetlands.

This is the same argument made by FORCE, Hamilton,

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Halton, Burlington and Milton, both Halton's and Hamilton's Chief Medical Officer of Health, as well as dozens of individuals who filed objections to the licence application.

St Marys was scheduled to do three separate groundwater recirculation tests last year but balked after doing just one. The results of that single test were hotly-disputed by the local community as high rains plagued the testing.

Apparently Diane Schwier of the MNR office in Guelph agreed (as did the MOE months ago), telling St Marys that without proper groundwater recirculation testing, "The ministry is not in a position to support the licence at this time."

She went on to say that the MNR wants to be present when the test is being done.

"Ministry staff suggests that such a demonstration is critical to licence approval, and recommends that testing be completed. Staff would like the opportunity to be in attendance when the test is carried out."

That, in itself, should be something, noted Flint, "because their Permit To Take Water (PTTW) expires on June 30th."

"So they will now have to apply to the MOE for a new PTTW."

The sole nagging concern for Flint at this point was the "at this time" notion in Schwier's letter of refusal.

"To give you a sports analogy, yes, they (St Marys) got tackled behind the line of scrimmage but they still have a down to go."

"When will they have no more downs?"

On the other hand, he noted, "the letter from the MNR was seven pages long and filled with concerns on their end. That's a hopeful sign."



Graham Flint