

November 5, 2019

Dear Editor:

I write to express my concern with the October 2019 article written by Mayor James Seeley on the aggregate industry published in the *Puslinch Today*. The article is not an accurate portrayal of the industry nor of the changes currently being proposed by the Provincial Government.

First we dispute Mayor Seeley's assertion that "responsible aggregate extraction should include a prohibition on below the water table extraction". This statement perpetuates the myth that aggregate extraction is harmful to water. Quarries and pits that operate below the water table are required by law to mitigate impacts to nearby sensitive features – such as wells, streams and wetlands. No chemicals are involved in the extraction of processing of aggregate materials. Aggregate is a clean industry.

Further, extracting below the water table allows for a volume of aggregate to be excavated that would otherwise require disturbing three to four times the area of ground. It is a smart, efficient and safe practice to deliver close-to-market aggregate to the growing communities of Ontario.

Second, the proposed changes to the *Aggregate Resources Act* (ARA) will provide the municipalities *more* input into an aggregate operation that wants to expand below the water table. The government is looking at a more rigorous application regime which will include the 'right to appeal' – a right municipalities do not currently have.

The proposed changes would also help clarify which level of government is regulating the depth of extraction. No one is proposing to relax the rules or remove controls. Everyone agrees the protection of our water resources is paramount. Mayor Seeley writes that Council would "lose the ability to instigate a vertical zoning by-law." Depth of extraction at a pit or quarry is governed by the ARA – as it has been for decades. The change simply provides clarity with respect to that fact.

Finally, we take exception to the comment that the industry has a track record of "not following site plans, with no repercussion". Ontario's aggregate industry is one of the province's most heavily governed industries. Twenty-five different pieces of legislation and literally dozens of regulations determine where, when and how stone, sand and gravel is extracted. And that's a good thing. Our industry wants to work in partnership with communities, to bring the aggregate that we all use every single day of our lives - to where it's needed in the most environmentally and economically way possible.

Regards,



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