



Working to Protect your Community and Environment

## Media Release

### CRC response to proposed changes to Aggregate Resources Act

The Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC) has responded to the recent proposals by the provincial government to revise the Aggregate Resources Act. The deadline for public input was November 4. The changes proposed reflect recommendations from a meeting of aggregate industry representatives with John Yakabuski Minister of Natural Resources earlier this year. CRC is concerned that these proposed regulatory changes will not ensure that our water, farmland and natural environment are protected from the potential negative impacts of aggregate extraction.

The proposed amendments to the Aggregate Resources Act (ARA) are outlined in ERO Number 019-0556 and proposed Bill 132. Overall the proposed changes to the ARA meet an “industry wish list” that reduces “the red tape” related to new and/or expanding aggregate operations.

The proposed amendments indicate the government will develop robust new groundwater protection regulations but very minimum details of the new regulations are discussed. The proposed regulations would also prohibit municipalities from using zoning by-law restrictions on the depth of extraction by an aggregate company. This change to the Act would essentially eliminate the ability of the municipality to protect groundwater sources.

Other changes to the Act that are proposed would lessen the ability of both the province and municipalities to regulate haul routes and road degradation impacts. Aggregate companies would also be able to make major site plan changes without Ministerial approval, provided that the regulatory requirements are met. In addition, companies could “self-file” site plan amendments. There is no proposed increase in funding for monitoring and surveillance by MNRF and aggregate fees will not change.

As a **public citizens’ group** the CRC strongly believes that the changes proposed to the Act will, in fact, dramatically erode the ability of our government to protect our water, our natural resources and our health and well-being. CRC’s recent experience assessing and taking a case objecting to the Hidden Quarry to the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal has provided great insight into the weaknesses in existing legislation. The ARA needs to be strengthened and improved and should **not represent a “red tape reduction”** for industry.

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Attachment: CRC submission to ERO