

WWW Contributory Participant Statement

CRC LPAT Hearing May 21, 2019

You have received my written statement and I'll use that as a basis for what I am going to say here.

My name is Arlene Slocombe and I am the Executive Director of Wellington Water Watchers (WWW) which is a volunteer-driven, non-profit organization based in Guelph, Ontario with a particular focus on the Grand River Watershed – the largest watershed in Southern Ontario.

Our belief in the Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC) and its goal to stop the development of the “Hidden Gravel Quarry” reflects our commitment to engaging, educating and supporting the people who live in communities within the Grand River Watershed and the tributaries that feed into the Watershed. The CRC campaign also shares our ongoing interest and participation in the preservation of the Paris-Galt Moraine.

Wellington Water Watcher's precautionary focus at this hearing is specific to the protection & conservation of groundwater which necessarily includes the land forms and eco-systems that play critical parts in the discharge, recharge & quality of drinking water. Groundwater is the source of drinking water for many municipalities within the greater Grand River Watershed and its sustainability is critically important. This is as true for Rockwood as it is for Guelph.

Sustainability of a contaminant-free supply of potable water in what we've come to know as the Golden Horseshoe area, however, is coming under increasing threat. The growth plan calls for an increase in population by 1 million residents by 2041 which will precipitate residential development, urban sprawl & industrial-creep into rural communities, and negatively impact Paris-Galt Moraine eco-systems. The loss of this moraine's water-filtering function through the removal of its topography and compositional uniqueness will be permanent. There will be no going back.

Add existing climate change & attempts to undermine or rescind environmental protections that are enshrined in such legislation as the Environmental Bill of Rights, the Environmental Protection Act, and the Clean Water Act, and we are presented with an ever-increasing list of

relevant factors that will cumulatively threaten the sustainable supply and quality of drinking water in the Golden Horseshoe. The domino effect is very much at play here.

Seeking definitive answers, we ask what analysis has been completed to elucidate the extent to which the cumulative effect of aggregate extraction negatively impacts groundwater recharge in moraine areas in Ontario? Consideration of the Paris-Galt Moraine and its impact on source water clearly suggests that its primary groundwater recharge areas must be conserved now in order to protect future drinking water supply in Grand River Watershed.

Moraines certainly offer readily accessible aggregate to corporate extractors for compressed or extended periods of time. It must be noted, however, that bedrock extraction, is not an interim land use when it comes to moraines in Ontario. There are permanent consequences wherever quarries are dug and the Paris-Galt Moraine has become host to a concentrated number of gravel pits with associated quality of life and environmental impacts.

What happens if the explosive energy of underwater blasting at the proposed Hidden Quarry site negatively impacts the supply and/or quality of drinking water to area residents? Ground vibrations & pressure created by blasting are capable of damaging, even destroying, physical structures, well & septic systems and eco-systems. The impact on the landscape and environment at the proposed site and surrounding area will be evident. Neither trees nor artificial berms will hide the reality of the proposed quarry's affects.

Consider just one example of this kind of damage: What happens when the blasting required for deep bedrock extraction results in damage to a bedrock aquifer or an aquitard that overlays the aquifer supplying Grand River Watershed communities with uniquely high-quality drinking water?

Since 2008 WWWW has been aware of and campaigning on the issue that unfolded at the DoLime gravel quarry in Guelph, currently known as the Guelph Limestone Quarry. This quarry is owned by River Valley Developments Inc (RVD), and was operated by James Dick Construction Limited (JDL). In 2008 work completed by the Ontario Geological Survey (OGS) in the vicinity of the quarry discovered that the excavation at the quarry had breached the Vinemount Member exposing the Gasport Aquifer

in the floor of the quarry. It is important to note that it was this independent research that discovered this breach, not the monitoring of the operating company, JDCL, the proponent for the Hidden Quarry.

Since this discovery in 2008, The City of Guelph appealed the company's renewed Permit to Take Water to the Environmental Appeal Tribunal in 2014 and the then MOE, MNR and the owners RVD have been in negotiations ever since. This issue remains to this day, 11 years later, an unresolved cautionary event that WWW believes is currently the most significant potential threat to local groundwater we are aware of, and it should not be forgotten.

As mentioned, WWW has been raising awareness about the Dolime issue since 2008, well before any talk of the proposed Hidden Quarry. We believe we should learn from our past mistakes and not allow the potential for this scenario to unfold again here.

The threat to groundwater created by the breaching of the aquitard at the DoLime quarry offers proof that no person or corporation can or should ever say 'never', "it won't happen here." There's always risk. We must understand – particularly today when consideration is being given to allow gravel and bedrock extraction from a location where the bedrock geology of the site and surrounding area is still not adequately understood (Daryl Cowell, 2016 Witness Statement, p.5), that the movement of groundwater to wells following ongoing blasting may no longer be predictable. Continuous blasting can negatively impact bedrock hydrogeology. Pre-existing fractures in the karst aquifer at the proposed quarry site, for instance, could enlarge, creating one or many surface-to-groundwater conduits capable of carrying contaminants to the source water that supplies the community with precious drinking water.

What happens then? Let's never allow what happened at Walkerton in a karst bedrock formation to be repeated. Who will pay the extraordinary cost of infrastructure replacement or restoration of a sustainable supply of quality drinking water? Who will cover the cost of damages to people's health and well-being as a result of drinking contaminated water? Who will bear the costs of permanently destroyed or damaged land forms and ecosystems?

We must proactively consider reasonable questions. What protection or recourse do the stakeholders - the people of Guelph-Eramosa Township

and Milton and Halton Region, with private wells and septic systems, or Rockwood residents dependent on municipal wells and sewage systems – whose lives depend on quality groundwater - have if their water supply is contaminated or wastewater systems irreparably damaged?

Residents living within several kilometres of the former DoLime Quarry, off Wellington Road in Guelph, experienced earthquake-like shaking, property or wastewater system damage or structural issues as a result of blasting carried out at DoLime might offer first-hand, useful answers.

The safeguarding & supply of quality drinking water, people's well-being, and the health and sustainability of a moraine's eco-systems must always take precedence over aggregate extraction, especially in areas already under significant & growing strain caused by climate change and imposed development.

Wise management of our environment and natural resources in tumultuous times requires serious consideration of potential risks to the protection and conservation of water. We must be accountable to current and future generations for any and all actions taken specific to the environment.

The paramount importance and environmental significance of the Grand River Watershed and the Paris-Galt Moraine that transits this Watershed – the wetlands, woodlands, farmlands, wildlife, bio-diverse eco-systems, geo-composition, to potable water must never be underestimated or destroyed as a result of poor stewardship. Wellington Water Watchers asks this tribunal to place the highest priority on preserving and protecting the sustainable supply of potable water, the Paris-Galt Moraine, and the bio-diversity of this environmentally important landscape.