

Community reacts to draft PTTW for Mountsberg quarry

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Published on May 12, 2008

Flamborough area residents are going to the top in making their concerns known about the draft Permit To Take Water (PTTW) posted Wednesday on the provincial government environmental bill of rights (ebr) website. Encouraged by a “call to action” by FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment), a grassroots citizen’s group opposed to the planned St. Marys Flamborough Quarry, residents are voicing their concerns about the PTTW directly to Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty.

Apart from reiterating concerns about the impact on their drinking water of the proposed quarry and its temporary PTTW to test an unproven and theoretical groundwater recirculation system, they are also protesting the prospect that the testing will be allowed during the summer months.

“To add insult to injury, St. Marys will be allowed to pump millions of litres of water out of our aquifer this summer while the residents of Carlisle can expect to endure yet another summer of water restrictions,” said FORCE chair Graham Flint.

Area residents had been assured by Ministry of Environment (MOE) and City of Hamilton officials as recently as a public meeting on the PTTW application a month ago that no testing would be permitted during the summer months.

Just last week, however, a meeting of MOE, city and St. Marys Cement representatives was held, at which time city officials withdrew their recommendation not to do the testing in the summer.

Jennifer Tuck, policy and planning manager for St. Marys, said that the posting of the draft PTTW is “a good positive sign” and “we are looking forward to the Ministry of Environment making a decision on our application.

Filed in October 2006, the application has been under fire by anti-quarry proponents from the start. “It has been a very long process,” Tuck said. “A lot of effort was put into getting this permit together.”

She repeated company assurances that the proposed pumping tests aren't expected to have any impact on the groundwater. "The history of St. Marys has been to never contaminate or deplete the local water supply," she said.

But Flint and other FORCE members aren't convinced. "Our community has identified water as a key reason for the proposed quarry's rejection since this proposal was raised in May 2004," he said of plans to establish a quarry on a 380-acre site on 11th Concession Road East near the Milborough Line.

FORCE members argue that the planned pumping tests are premature and shouldn't be allowed to proceed until the Halton/Hamilton Source Protection Committee has had an opportunity to do its work on completing a threats assessment report for the local watershed and prepare a source protection plan to remove or reduce those threats.

"There is still time for the McGuinty government to take action to honour the intent of its source protection laws and planning process," Flint said.

The draft PTTW can be accessed online at the government's ebr site at <http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/>. Search using Registry Number #010-3469. Residents can comment on the posting over a 30-day period.



<http://www.flamboroughreview.com/news/article/175651>



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