
Crowd applauds bid to crush quarry plan

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Hundreds of people jumped to their feet last night to applaud an appeal to the Ontario government to stop consideration of a huge limestone quarry proposed by St. Marys Cement.

Graham Flint, chair of the anti-quarry group FORCE, drew the applause when he said, "We call on the McGuinty government to step in and put an end to the waste of time and energy by all agencies involved ... put an end to this entire quarry application process."

Flint spoke at a public meeting held at the request of the Ministry of the Environment, which has for two years been reviewing the company's application to test a groundwater pumping system to keep the 13-storey-deep pit dry if a quarry is eventually licensed.

But Flint argued there's no way quarrying should be allowed in a natural heritage zone of the provincial Greenbelt, and no way a pump test should be allowed before the new Hamilton-Halton Source Water Protection Committee, set up under the post-Walkerton Clean Water Act, studies the aquifer supplying drinking water wells in the area, including the municipal wells that serve the community of Carlisle.

Bill Bardswick, the ministry's regional director, told an overflow crowd of more than 300 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School that his office is preparing a draft permit for the test because permission can't be refused if the test can be done safely.

He told the audience: "Don't feel like there's no one out there watching for you. That's our job. We are going to make sure we scrutinize this extremely well to be sure this impacts no one."

Bardswick also stressed that processing the permit "in no way means we endorse the quarry."

He said draft terms of the permit will be made available for public review and the company will be required to monitor private wells whose owners agree. The permit will also require that an independent third party monitor company consultants conducting the test because "we want a certain level of confidence that data out of the tests is good data."

For more information, visit the company website, flamboroughquarry.ca, or FORCE's site, stopthequarry.ca.

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