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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Open letter re: Strada Aggregates? proposal

Dear Editor,

As a resident of Melancthon Township, I oppose the Strada Aggregates application for a below water table blasting quarry.

Here in Melancthon, we already successfully stopped Seth Klarman's Baupost/ Highland Mega-Quarry back in 2008 to 2014. We stopped it due to the science. The science hasn't changed in all those years. Same aquifers, same karst drainage system, same science.

The governments of Canada need to understand that the most precious resource we have is our water. Surely by this point, we collectively should acknowledge this fact. With respect to limestone extraction, the primary concern should be the compromising of water tables.

Due to the Provincial Government's lack of environmental and scientific understanding, they have deemed Ontario as an open extraction focus, removing the EA necessity from the ARA process. This is disastrous.

The aquifers in the Melancthon area feed and flow into many river systems. The Grand, The Pine, The Nottawasaga, The Noisy, The Boyne, and The Credit, as well as The Saugeen. Compromising any of these rivers would affect the flow and water quality for millions of Ontarians, let alone the aquatic inhabitants, such as the Brown Trout. Melancthon is significantly higher in elevation than Toronto, at 541-542 meters. We are also a habitat for many species at risk.

In 2021, Strada joined forces with the North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce (NDACT) to create a community agreement. This agreement essentially stated that if the peer reviewers deemed the studies safe, Strada would annually fork over monies to the Township recreation funding. Strada signed the agreement, which also stated that if the scientific results showed this wouldn't work, Strada would not apply.

The community peer reviewer for hydrology, Garry Hunter, deemed that the water would be compromised and what Strada is suggesting won't work. Then Strada brought in their own hydrologist, and those studies revealed that the water would be safe. Strada and NDACT also had residents' wells tested and promised that if something happens to the wells, water would be trucked in.

Garry's studies showed that the personal wells of the residents due east of the quarry would be reduced to 50 per cent of their capacity. The Pine River flux (flow) would also be reduced to 50 per cent. The Pine flows into the Nottawasaga, the Noisy, and the Mad Rivers and affects the flow into the Boyne, Saugeen, and Credit Rivers. One point I'd like to mention is that the Nottawasaga flows into Georgian Bay. Reduced flow, blasting debris, and wells compromised. On the west, south, and north sides of the quarry, farm fields would flood.

Blasting would occur three times a week. The toxic particles would be spread by our winds at this altitude, flowing over our water sources and farm fields, let alone into the residents' homes.

This would be Strada's first time at below water table extraction. We are not going to be the guinea pig for their experiments. Back in 2010, when I was a Township Councillor, and fighting the Mega Quarry, Strada sat in our chambers and promised they would never dig below the water table. Here we are in 2025, and they wonder why the community doesn't trust them. We know that Ontario has enough aggregate to last for 38 years, and although the process of recycling cement and gravel is initially expensive, the payoff is the sustainability of food and water for years to come.

· Reserve Lifespan: At the average annual consumption rate, the Greater Golden Horseshoe reserves are estimated to last for approximately 38 years without the need for new pits or quarries.

· Annual Production: In 2023, the total production of mineral aggregates in Ontario was just over 167.7 million tonnes. This figure varies slightly each year based on construction demand and economic activity.

· Licensed vs. Consumed: Ontario currently licenses the extraction of significantly more aggregate (approximately thirteen times more) than it consumes on average each year.

· Availability Concerns: While overall reserves are substantial, there are ongoing concerns about the scarcity of high-quality aggregate products close to major market areas, such as the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), which can lead to increased transportation costs and environmental impacts.

In conclusion, the approval of this application would destroy Ontario's very much-needed farmland and water sources, and the hopes of us weary Ontarians. Science once again has proven that when aquifers are compromised, the results are catastrophic. I am requesting an EA for this project.

Regards,

Nancy Malek