

The Foundation for Aggregate Studies

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BRIEF

to

ONTARIO MINERAL AGGREGATE WORKING PARTY

from

FOUNDATION FOR AGGREGATE STUDIES

June, 1976.

I. Introduction

The Foundation for Aggregate Studies is pleased to have this opportunity to present a concise but very brief submission to the Ontario Mineral Aggregate Working Party. We are given to understand that our meeting on June 14, 1976, will be curtailed to one half hour, which is unfortunately too short a time to present our views in full.

The Foundation is composed of individuals, organizations and representatives of municipalities across the Province, concerned about the effects of the aggregate industry on municipalities, townships and their environments.

It is the prime concern of the Foundation that gravel, stone and sand mining operations, supply, demand and location within the Province do not conflict with existing land uses or future official plans for residential and socially sensitive areas.

The Foundation shares the concern of the Government in the above matters, and for this purpose submits the following observations and recommendations.

As our group is truly representative of citizens, environmentalists, municipal organizations across the Province, we feel that the Ontario Mineral Aggregate Working Party and the Foundation for Aggregate Studies should work hand in hand towards mutually acceptable recommendations to the Government.

II. The Proctor and Redfern Studies

On reading the available Proctor and Redfern reports, the Foundation finds the following key issues to be in conflict with the Foundation's main aims and objectives regarding the aggregate industry.

The reports suggest many recommendations, amongst which we have picked three examples:

- A. That recommendations be made to amend the Municipal Act to wrest land use planning in the case of the aggregate industry away from municipalities;
- B. That there will be a drastic shortage of gravel in this Province in the foreseeable future;
- C. That pits should be operated near distribution points to cut costs, and to ensure that gravel can be secured from the closes area to where it will be used (i.e. high density areas).

With regards to recommendation A, the Foundation holds the view that rather than wresting the power away from the municipalities with regards to aggregate mining operations, more power should be given to them. Most municipalities wish to control sources of aggregate to ensure an adequate and cheap supply for municipal purposes. Another desirable reason for municipal control over the aggregate industry is that the industry can be a severe nuisance for municipal residents, a despoiler of the countryside, cause severe traffic and highway hazard conditions on municipal roads, and thus cause expenses for the municipality much beyond any revenues generated by the location of such undertakings

within the municipality.

Suggestion B above, that there will be a drastic shortage of gravel in this Province in the foreseeable future is dubious and the Foundation is of the view that adequate supplies of aggregates are available in less socially sensitive areas of this Province.

Recommendation C, where the Reports make the point that transportation costs are a large factor being considered in favour of more pits in highly populated areas. We agree that protection of the environment costs money - increasingly so the longer protection is avoided. But there is public support for the 'pay now - save later' approach, and as many government officials have learned to appreciate, there is justification in paying just a little more to keep the environment aesthetically pleasing. The longer the aggregate operators are allowed to desecrate the landscape of the urban communities, the more money it is going to cost to correct it.

The basic reason why the operator seeks to mine his aggregate as close as possible to the market and lower transportation costs is to meet competitive prices of delivered products. It is the only way the operator can compete. This is the crux of the entire problem of aggregate extraction. It is at the heart of the basis for the Proctor/Redfern recommendation to wrest control of authority away from the municipalities.

We recommend the adoption of a basing point system to equalize hauling charges, so that dispersion of pits can be practically and economically achieved. If the concept has been widely and successfully used for other commodities, why can it not work for the aggregate industry? Transport of bulk commodities by rail or water has proven, in many cases, to be much more economical than by truck, beyond the short haul and far less irritating to local residents.

III. Summary and recommendations

The Foundation appreciates the conflicting uses between aggregate mining and conservation/recreation/housing. We suggest that rather than locating more pits in the 'golden horseshoe area' with something close to one quarter of the country's population concentrated therein, protection of the natural environment is vital. Location of new pits, and it must be proven beyond a doubt that new pits are required, should be located in remote areas. The Foundation believes that the number of aggregate pits is already too highly concentrated near urban areas, and that they should be much more widely dispersed to reduce the impact on socially sensitive urban areas and long settled rural areas.

We respectfully submit the following recommendations to be implemented into the Working Party's recommendations to the Provincial Government:

- A. Licensing of new gravel pits to be restricted to areas of environmental and social suitability. The Foundation believes there are adequate reserves in less socially sensitive areas of the Province;
- B. Location of new pits and quarries should be regulated under the Environmental Assessment Act, and therefore would fall subject to environmental assessment;
- C. Appropriate amendments to be made to relevant laws to retain and strengthen complete local municipal control over the aggregate industry. The present powers are vague, cumbersome and costly to effectively enforce - to the citizen, the Government or administrative bodies, and to the operator.

- D. Carefully assess transportation costs versus social and environmental degradation. Studies must be made on alternative methods of transport to achieve competitive pricing throughout the industry.
- E. Regulations amending existing legislation with regard to rehabilitation standards.

It is the wish of the Foundation that the Ontario Mineral Aggregate Working Party and the Foundation keep in close contact with each other on a regular basis. We would request that when deliberations on the Working Party's submission to the Ontario Government are complete, the finished documents be forwarded to the Foundation at the earliest possible opportunity.

Respectfully submitted.

FOUNDATION FOR AGGREGATE STUDIES

June 14, 1976.