

Better Green than Blue

Why do we have elections, Why do I vote?

Society has the duty to express support, or the need for change, on how it feels the system has addressed the ever changing needs of people at large. We can complain about 'money' controlling everything, that we have no power etc. Yet 'money' does not control my vote, it is MY check besides the name of the candidate who can best represent what we, the people value as really important.

In Dufferin Caledon, no other application for a zoning change would have altered our collective future as much as the Highland Companies Mega Quarry application. Truly stunning in its size and complexity, its imposition of thousands of trucks to our commuter traffic, the managing of vast amounts of our fresh water and the destruction of thousands of acres of our most productive farmland, it surprised many of us.

I attended all three all candidates debates. In Orangeville I asked our sitting MPP Ms. Jones when did she notify County Council, the lower tier municipalities and her constituency that we could soon become home to North America's second largest open pit limestone mine, and she answered that she did not find out until we all found out, thus could not give any advance notice to anyone.

The Ontario's office of the Integrity Commissioner shows lobbying started Set 2nd 2008, referencing the 'Melancthon Quarry' back then, lobbying MPP's and 9 different Ministries, plus Cabinet and the Premier's Office. Former PC Charles Harnick was one of six lobbyists registered.

At the Shelburne debate I asked Ms. Jones if she really expected that the good people of this riding should believe that she did not know about the 'Melancthon Quarry' until 3.5 years after the lobbying effort started. Her answer was that 'This question is beneath you Carl?.'

This community fought hard to get the resource governing ARA legislation reviewed, Ms. Jones was a member of that committee. I have read many pages of the transcripts, I never read a single sentence arguing that the ARA should never again allow a similar application, risking all that fresh water and the land that produces 20 tons of human food per acre. Fact is, a similar application could be filed tomorrow.

This community has raised 100's of thousands of dollars and has spent thousands of true volunteer hours to get its voice heard regarding various aggregate resource applications, including the Highland Companies attempt, yet nothing has changed. The system is clearly in control here in Dufferin Caledon, but I control the way I vote. I will vote Karren Wallace in this election.

Carl Cosack

Industry gets

'special treatment'

Re: Preferential Treatment of Aggregate Industry

Residents of Ontario continue to raise concerns about the special treatment given to the aggregate industry, yet these concerns are not being addressed in government policy decisions. The recent review of the Aggregate Resources Act did not adequately recognize the concerns raised by the public and impacted local communities.

The special, preferential treatment of the aggregate industry needs to stop. Key pieces of environmental protection legislation include an "exception" clause for the aggregate industry.

Big business interests should not take priority over the health, safety and quality of life of rural Ontarians, the environment and prime farmland.

Aggregate producers enjoy exemptions from requirements that apply to other types of development, including exemptions from environmental assessments, exemptions from Class III industrial zoning, promotion of "recycling" of industrial waste on rural extraction sites and reduced setbacks from adjacent residential properties.

The processing of construction demolition waste should not be disguised as "recycling." It is unacceptable that a clause mandating the siting of "recycling facilities" into pits and quarries was added into the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement after the public consultation period had concluded.

"Recycling" facilities, where construction and demolition waste occurs, should be located in lands zoned for industrial operations. They should not be located without appropriate setbacks from other sensitive land uses, including rural homes, schools and open aquifers.

This provincial election has brought out all parties seeking support from rural Ontario. I am calling on all candidates and all parties to stop this preferential treatment of the aggregate industry and to announce their support for a fair, impartial review of aggregate policy if they are elected.

Eileen Dykes

Alton