

MC2 News Letter November 2025

Separating Fact from Fantasy in Aggregate Industry PR

The public comment period for the Strada Quarry application is now closed. Thanks to all of you who submitted letters opposing the application. The “ball” is now in Strada’s court. Actually over 1000 of them at last count! Strada now has to respond and address the issues you have raised. It has been a lot of work, but we are still in the beginning stage of the process. In the meantime, the Aggregate Industry is gearing up its powerful PR machine to push for more “streamlined” and faster approval process. In other words, less regulation and oversight.

The industry claims that they are “**stewards**” of the land that they quarry. In my dictionary, **Stewardship** is defined as the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care. To be a “**Steward of the Land**” means taking responsibility for the care and management of natural resources like land, air, and water for the benefit of the current and future generations.

Let’s compare that with the process and language of below the water-table blast quarrying:

- First Strip off the “Overburden” (i.e., the top soil, rock, and other materials that lie on top of a mineral deposit, sometimes called “waste” or “spoil”.)
- Divert any flow of water from surface run-off, underground streams and aquifers.
- Blast, crush and haul away the limestone, dolomite etc. (e.g., the material that forms the structural body of a 400 million year old aquifer.)

Maybe it’s just me, but that sounds less like Stewardship and a whole lot more like **Destructive Exploitation** - the process of using a resource in an unsustainable and harmful manner that results in its severe degradation, depletion, or destruction, for short-term profit or gain.

The industry points to the regulations that require the land to be rehabilitated once the the “valuable resource” has been extracted (and the license is surrendered). Yet, in Ontario alone, over 25,000 hectares of quarried land, idle for more than 10 years, has not been rehabilitated. This is an area the size of Brampton! It is much less costly to keep renewing the license of an idle quarry than to rehabilitate the land.

The industry also claims that pits and quarries do not dry up wells or harm watersheds as 92% - 98% of water is returned to the local watershed. First of all, there absolutely are reports of wells drying up after quarrying has started in an area. The quarry often denies responsibility, blaming faulty well construction or lack of proper maintenance and puts the onus on the well owner to prove it is quarry caused. Secondly, quarry operations do not necessarily return the water to the local flow from which it was taken. For example, the Strada quarry will divert water from the Pine to the Boyne. The aggregate PR pitch does not differentiate between local watershed and original water course.

The engine of the industry’s PR machine is the **Ontario Stone Sand and Gravel Association**. Here is an excerpt from their news letter - “Queen’s Park was rockin’ on April 15th, 2024, as more than 40 members... held 42 meetings with Ministers, MPPs, Deputy Ministers, senior political staff and key decision makers at the Ontario Legislature. OSSGA’s message was clear: the industry is in crisis. Without faster approvals for new close-to-market aggregate sites, Ontario’s ambitious infrastructure plan is in peril.”

We are not alone in this fight. There are currently 14 communities in Ontario that are opposing quarry

applications. **Reform Gravel Mining** has called for a moratorium on new pits and quarries, so that a complete and transparent evaluation of the real need for aggregate and the effective regulation of the industry can be undertaken.

Stewardship or Destructive Exploitation??? The Aggregate Industry can't tell the difference but the People of Ontario can!!!