

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS



Ontario Conservation Centre

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Ms. Katie Rosa, Aggregate Resources Officer
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Policy Division
Natural Resources Conservation Policy Branch
Resource Development Section
300 Water Street
Peterborough Ontario
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Dear Katie:

Subject: EBR Registry Number 012-5444: A Blueprint for Change: A Proposal to modernize and strengthen the Aggregate Resources Act policy framework

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), its 100,000 members, subscribers and supporters, and 725 member clubs, we have reviewed the proposed changes to the *Aggregate Resources Act* policy framework and provide the following support, questions, and recommendations. This letter will go through the Blueprint for Change (Blueprint) document by section and offer general suggestions throughout.

Background

For many years, aggregate extraction has occurred throughout Ontario with consultation limited to those within immediate proximity, and some involvement from the local municipal governments and conservation authorities, when applicable. Though the direct use of lands under licence for the purposes of aggregate extraction have not been considered much of an issue for direct impacts on hunting and fishing opportunities, the OFAH has a growing interest in integrated land management, cumulative impacts on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, and system-based conservation. Aggregate and quarry operations, though often relatively small on the landscape, can have significant impact on the local ecosystems, as well as larger systems like the hydrologic and hydrogeological cycles. Therefore, the OFAH has particular interest in the opportunity to contribute to the process for the modernization, synchronization, and streamlining of the *Aggregate Resources Act* and promote the sustainable development of resources in Ontario.

Currently, one of the key components for the determination of licence type is the amount of material shipped from the pit site. As explained in the document and current policy, this is to help account for potential noise and dust issues, and increased degradation of municipal facilities and roads from the use. The determination of the site classification using this system does not change the royalty rates, nor the contribution rates that go to the municipality or road authority organization. The determination of licensing by the rate of material being removed from the site does not account for the environmental impact issues related to a site, and the amount of aggregate being removed from a site is extremely variable based on market demands, construction in the area, and availability of labour. A small site operated for a year may have a very high extraction rate, and when finished, has minimal environmental impact, while another site has a small extraction rate but is operated for 30 years with a significant environmental impact.

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General Recommendation 1

Place more authority in the hands of the local municipality for the determination of rules related to dust mitigation, allowable hours of operation (noise/light), and other site specific conditions, through the use of municipal permits (development, commercial, industrial).

General Recommendation 2

Consider the determination between Class A and B licences to be based on total area (ha).

If implemented, these suggestions would account for the issues currently determining the difference between the different classes of pits on private land in Ontario, while allowing the total size for the pit to have more significance than currently accounted. Other jurisdictions currently employ a size determinate class system for aggregate extraction, like Alberta, and their Code of Practice for Pits could provide a framework that can be modelled to meet the unique requirements for ecosystems in Ontario.

Blueprint Section A

The current requirements do not account for multiple sensitive habitats and systems, and is not flexible enough to accommodate requirements under the *Endangered Species Act*. As such, the OFAH is in complete support of enhancement of requirements to reflect the changes in government legislation and policy, and promote a more accountable proponent. The proposed system of risk-based assessment for water impact studies on operations both above and below the water table is logical and streamlines the process for proponents. One part the OFAH does not support is allowing the “qualified expert” hired by the proponent to determine when a cumulative effects study is required. Accountability is important, and putting the determination of requirements into the authority of a party hired by the proponent erodes the integrity of the application.

Section “A” Recommendation

Instead of proponent-hired consultants determining cumulative effects study requirements, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) should state that a cumulative effects study is required unless exempted by the minister. The request for exemption would, in turn, require justification from a “qualified expert” that is reviewed by the MNR approvals staff and either accepted or denied.

Blueprint Section B

Agricultural lands in Ontario are a limited resource. These lands are not only important for the production of food for human consumption, but have become naturalized/important lands for many migratory birds, habitat for mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, including several species at risk. This understanding is the premise of many land management strategies, and programs including the Green Belt, the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Niagara Escarpment, and other plans. Therefore, the OFAH is in full support of a pre-extraction agricultural capability statement and study for Class A pits and quarries. As stated earlier, the current system for determination of classes based on extraction rates does not capture all of the pits that may have significant impact on the soil; this further supports our recommendation of determining licence class by total hectares disturbed.

The rehabilitation of the lands to meet the pre-extraction capabilities is very important on agricultural lands in Ontario. The OFAH supports the current provincial mandate toward the conservation of farm land and soil capabilities (e.g. Green Belt Plan). That said, other jurisdictions have proven that the return to the exact same form and function is nearly impossible. Soil loss, admixing, course fragment in topsoil, and subsoil compaction (bulk density alteration) always occur with soil handling. Some of these impacts are either very difficult or impossible to remediate, so expectation of rehabilitation to the same measures as pre-disturbance will result in continual non-compliance.

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Section “B” Recommendation

Determine a basis for evaluating “equivalent land capabilities,” based scientifically on measurable standards.

The determination of these standards can be specific to agricultural classification (Class 1-3) or specific soil type, as defined by the *Canadian System of Soil Classification*, or based on eco-type (hardwood forest vs. peatland). As it is impossible to rehabilitate to pre-disturbance condition some leniencies must be acknowledged based on current standard operating standards. Examples may include:

1. Average topsoil coverage being an average of 80 percent of controls/pre-extraction levels in the same location as previously tested (requiring a standardized system for evaluation/mapping);
2. Allowable increases of course fragment in subsoil of 10-20 percent, and in topsoil of 5-10 percent;
3. Slight changes in bulk density that do not significantly impact soil permeability and water flow; and,
4. Changes of soil texture classes limited through allowing maximum of 15 percent admixing or a change to an adjacent class in the Soil Texture Triangle.

There have been several efforts done by multiple jurisdictions to determine meaningful and scientific-significant reclamation guidelines and requirements. Though several of these requirements are specific to other resource industries many of their underlying principles are applicable to aggregate extraction, and to conditions in many areas in Ontario, even with the significant differences in soil types. The Alberta 2010 Reclamation Criteria for Well Sites and Associated Activities, or its 1995 predecessor, would again easily provide a base to develop meaningful aggregate rehabilitation criteria in Ontario.

Currently, there has not been a Standard Operating Procedures or Code of Practice produced for operations or the handling of soils in pits. As such, there is a limited capability for the enforcement of pit operations, and the protection of topsoil and subsoil.

General Recommendation 3

The establishment of a Standard Operating Procedure or Code of Practice that standardizes topsoil and subsoil treatment and management to give more enforcement option to the Aggregate Technical Specialists and truly protect topsoil.

A Code of Practice developed for pit operations to determine enforceable standards like:

1. Topsoil stockpiles must be on topsoil, subsoil on subsoil, etc.;
2. Minimum distance between stockpiles of different types of materials must be a set distance (e.g. topsoil must be two meters from subsoil);
3. Stockpiles must be a set distance from a steep slopes to prevent mass slumping and admixing; and,
4. Topsoil and subsoil must be stripped minimum distances from a pit face.

These would allow for protection of topsoil in general, but specifically for the protection of soils in areas of concern, like the Niagara Escarpment.

Blueprint Section C

The OFAH is in full support of an enhanced summary statement in an application. This will allow for a clearer understanding of intended operations and rehabilitation intents for any party reviewing the application in a consultative fashion.

Blueprint Section D

Consistency between the different application types will allow for fewer mistakes and allow for a streamlined process for application and review. The OFAH is in full support of an established maximum disturbance area in a pit. This will require progressive rehabilitation of pits which could potentially limit the amount of impact due to high winds, flash flooding, or other significant events.

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Section “D” Recommendation

In conjunction with an established maximum disturbed area, the OFAH suggests the implementation of a rehabilitation security to be paid by the proponent and held by the MNR in the Aggregate Resources Trust Fund until final rehabilitation has been confirmed, especially for Class A pits (based on total disturbance area or by material movement).

This recommendation will further encourage rehabilitation of the site, and provide further funding to the MNR to ensure final reclamation of abandoned sites. The security should be based on third party rehabilitation costs, and should be estimated using accredited resources like the current Road Builders.

Guide, rental rates for equipment, and costs for hiring “qualified experts” to establish a rehabilitation plan and perform a final rehabilitation evaluation.

Blueprint Section E

Though every lake and river bed site is unique and will require a unique set of studies for determination of impact, the OFAH does agree that a Terms of Reference will be required for each site, and the references need to be reviewed by the ministry. The OFAH does have some concern that there may be a lack of consistency when dealing with these sites due to staff experience levels and background knowledge.

Section “E” Recommendation

Establish a system or centralized review group for this type of application that is staffed by qualified limnologists and experienced aggregate technical specialists.

Blueprint Section F

The OFAH supports having plain language used in the summary, as this will allow for a more meaningful summary for stakeholders who do not have a technical background in these areas.

Blueprint Section G

The OFAH does support the development of more consistent timeframes and notification practices, and for the allowance of the applicant/proponent to extend the consultation process, if necessary to work out concerns with stakeholders who are participating in the consultation process.

Section “G” Recommendation

Related to “General Recommendation 2,” we suggest that the notification requirements be based primarily on total disturbance size in conjunction with other triggering factors including, but not limited to, production/production rates within certain proximity to residences, species at risk habitat, significant fish and wildlife habitat, and First Nations considerations.

The Environmental Registry only provides a notification of the opportunity to consult on aggregate operations. Currently, the application is only available to review by physically going to the location where printed copies of the plans are located, or through direct contact with the proponent (in which case, they can then decide to send a digital copy to a concerned stakeholder). As the definition of concerned stakeholder can include individuals and organizations not in the immediate area of the proposed pit, this makes it difficult to review, especially because the proponent is not currently required to provide a digital copy to anyone.

General Recommendation 4

Re-classify the application document from being “proprietary” and covered by FIPPA, and determine that once the application is provided to the ministry, it becomes public information allowing for the inclusion of a digital copy of the application on the Environmental Registry.

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Blueprint Section H

The OFAH supports the implementation of standards for First Nation consultation within private lands that affect First Nations communities.

Blueprint Section I

The OFAH supports the requirement for/inclusion of digital information for acceptance. This allows for easier communication for all stakeholders, and will increase the abilities for stakeholder objections and concerns to be heard. This section would also allow for easy inclusion of this information as it relates to “**General Recommendation 4.**”

Blueprint Section J

The OFAH supports the decision to require a new application for pits going from above water table to below water table. This type of change has the potential for a significant impact, and should require a full public consultation approach; therefore, an entirely new application is appropriate.

Blueprint Section K

The OFAH supports the implementation of a new application for small, temporary pits on agricultural lands by the farmer. We support the requirement of having a qualified expert determine the water table and the actual agricultural benefits of the extraction activities.

Blueprint Section L and M

The OFAH supports the use of an application for a permit for the removal of existing stockpiles on public and private lands, but do have concerns about rehabilitation. **If stockpiles are on un-rehabilitated land, who is responsible for final rehabilitation work?**

Blueprint Section N

The OFAH understands the necessity of processes that can streamline the application and approval for the MNRF and industry, if the processes for this efficiency does not have potential to negatively impact environmental integrity. Therefore, with proper justification, we may support the ability to waive application requirements.

Blueprint Section O

Though this provision would allow for some reduction in the workload for MNRF staff, there should not be an ability to refuse to accept an application, particularly if it provides all of the required information and will not be affecting a special protection area. If a proponent did initial consultation and was able to work with groups and the public related to an activity on Crown land, there should be no reason to refuse the application. If there is a standing conflict with an interested stakeholder, then this should be considered an incomplete portion of the application, at which time the application can be refused. Allowing the ability to refuse an application without defensible justification may result in conflicts and accusations related to discrimination or favouritism, which could result in a negative image of the MNRF.

Blueprint Section P

The OFAH understands the necessity of third party peer review of applications and provided information, especially with human resource limitations within the ministry. Therefore, we do support the use of third party peer review when integrity is upheld.

Section ‘P’ Recommendation

If a third party peer review is to occur, it should not be funded directly by the proponent, but paid for through the Aggregate Resource Trust Fund. When a peer review is performed, it should be done anonymously with the reviewer identity withheld and original applicant or technical author redacted from the report being reviewed.

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Blueprint Section Q

The extension of the grandfathering timeline to 2.5 years from one year is a significant change. If operations fail to meet requirements to operate, it makes little sense to allow for 2.5 years to make a determination, as opposed to the current one year timeline. The preparation of an application for an existing pit should occur within six months of the onset of a newly designated area with an allowance of six months to review the application and determine if the operations meet requirements. If it is determined the pits require more information to bring the application up to standard, or there are minor changes to operations necessary to bring the pit into compliance, then extensions are appropriate; however, if there are significant changes required to bring the pit up to safety, environmental, and social standards, then operations should be stopped until an appropriate plan is made.

Section “O” Recommendation

Maintain the one-year grandfathering timeframe with the ability for the ministry to extend the period, only if minor changes are required.

Blueprint Section R and S

In order to efficiently allocate ministry resources the implementation of a “permit by rule” will allow aggregate activities that are low risk to operate without lengthy waits to gain approval. The OFAH supports the implementation of strategies that will allow for the ministry to concentrate its resources on high risk activities, while still maintaining ecological standards.

Section “R and S” Recommendation

If there is a “permit to rule” implemented the importance of “General Recommendation 3” becomes even more important to protect minimally regulated pits. The implementation of a “permit to rule” system for low risk pits has the potential for local residential impacts and some degree of environmental impact; therefore, if implemented with “General Recommendation 1” some oversight would still be present in these pits.

The implementation of the “permit to rule” with extending responsibilities and input to the municipal authorities would require permission to designate municipal staff to operate under the *Aggregate Resources Act*. By allowing the municipality to regulate pits through permits, while allocating municipal inspectors provincial inspection powers, the municipality can ensure “permit to rule” pits are operating to the standards designated under legislation/regulations or under a Code of Practice (suggested in **General Recommendation 3**). Similar structures to aggregate management is employed in other jurisdictions and, again, the Alberta Code of Practice for Pits (under their *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*) could easily be modified to meet the specific needs in Ontario for our different ecosystems and legislative structure.

Blueprint Section T

The OFAH supports the implementation of primary purpose exemption orders in order to limit the potential for the abuse of such exemptions. Improvements should be completed within a timeline for the primary purpose (e.g. agricultural land improvement); therefore, the removal of the aggregate should occur during that time. Without the timeline, the purposes of the pit operation may become difficult to discern when the primary purpose is aggregate extraction with agricultural improvement being a secondary concern.

Blueprint Section U

The OFAH supports the new provisions allowing the requirement of additional studies and updated site plans for existing aggregate sites.

Section “U” Recommendation

In addition to enabling the ministry to request a new plan at any time, the province should require the submission of updated site plans for pits on a six to ten year cycle to be submitted by a qualified expert, similar to strategies currently employed in Forest Management.

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Though the ability of being able to request additional studies and site plans is important, a mandated update to site plans has many regulatory benefits. Updated site plans will ensure:

1. That the pit operations are modified to align with changing standard operating procedures/practices;
2. Monitors and accounts for any changes that occur in the species at risk list or best practices for threatened species mitigation;
3. Changes in hydrology and hydrogeology are acknowledged; and,
4. Provide information that may be important for cumulative effects monitoring.

Though some of these points might be covered upon the development of a Code of Practice (**General Recommendation 3**), there is still significant value in mandatory site plan updates from a regulatory point of view.

Blueprint Section V

The protection of source water and automatic changes to conditions to meet these protection standards is important to the OFAH. The OFAH supports the proposed changes, as they promote consistency and protection for groundwater.

Section “V” Recommendation

In addition to developing conditions to protect sensitive municipal aquifers, protective conditions that extend to groundwater that are springs/headwaters for coldwater streams integral for spawning populations of coldwater fish species (e.g. trout) in Ontario should be developed.

Blueprint Section W

When tonnage from imported recycling material is included when determining the pit class, or part of the total amount of allowable material at a site, the regulation of extraction activities at the pit itself seems like a secondary concern. A pit site that recycles large amounts of material with very little aggregate extraction should not be regulated in the same manner as a pit or quarry that only uses new aggregate material. The inclusion of recycled material towards the total tonnage allowed to be removed from a site in theory takes away from what can be produced from the pit. Therefore, if the costs of shipping the recycling material is more than, or equal to, the cost of extracting new material, the inclusion of recycled material in any “allowable tonnage” condition may act as a deterrent to using recycling materials. The OFAH promotes the use of recycled materials as much as is viable

Section “W” Recommendation

Pits should be managed for the removal of new aggregate, and there should be incentive to recycle material as much as possible. If road infrastructure impact is a concern, there should be incentives for “point of use” recycling programs using mobile mixing and blending facilities.

As the premise for including recycled material weights in the “allowable tonnage” condition is the impacts on road infrastructure, the promotion of “point of use” mixing facilities and equipment would eliminate many of these concerns. Additionally allowing for municipal permitting to occur concurrently on provincially managed pits (**General Recommendation 1**) would allow for municipalities to manage the impacts on roads independently of provincial regulation of the pit or quarry.

Blueprint Section X

The OFAH supports the implementation of rehabilitation reporting requirements. This reporting will ensure a better understanding, and allows for more involvement by MNRF rehabilitation specialists in the processes being employed. Though, as stated above, the provincial regulation of pits should be geared mostly towards the extraction of materials and rehabilitation. The OFAH supports the inclusion of information of imported materials into the compliance report due to the potential value when it comes to rehabilitation and, if contamination events were to occur, knowledge of where materials came from is very important.

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Blueprint Section Y

The maintenance of information related to the importation of materials is important for rehabilitation activities on a site. The OFAH understands that with other land use activities having “excess” topsoil during building and development of roads, houses, and other structures, the use of these materials for rehabilitation purposes may be a way to ensure use of these valuable fertile soils. That said, there is large associated risk, including soil pathogen transfer and invasive species distribution, involved with the importation of soil and organic materials between areas, even relatively local sources.

Section “Y” Recommendations

Develop a standardized, scientifically sound procedure for the sampling methods for materials to be imported/exported for the purposes of rehabilitation of sites.

Though not an inclusive list, the methods employed should include/allow for the determination of:

1. A scientifically significant amount of grab samples required per unit of material (e.g. grab samples per cubic yard);
2. Potential soil diseases and pathogens;
3. Presence of viable seeds, including beneficial species, weeds, noxious weeds, and invasive species;
4. Acceptable structural characteristics (related to suggestions after **Section “B” Recommendation**); and,
5. Appropriate chemical and microbial composition for the area of importation.

Blueprint Section Z

As mentioned in section “X,” the OFAH supports better records keeping to ensure all activities can be tracked for better regulation of activities that have a potential to impact ecosystems or natural cycles.

Blueprint Section AA

Without significant alteration of the entire Aggregate Site Inspection Application (ASIA) and the entire MNRF aggregate inspection program, the alteration of the reporting will have a significant impact on the ability for the ministry to determine the frequency of inspection of sites based on their risk based assessment model. The self-assessment compliance report provides some input into the information entered into the ASIA and determines the necessity of an inspection the following year. The implementation of the two-year (Class A) and three-year (Class B) frequency will not allow for the information to be provided, and will increase the reliance on third party complaints and a reactionary approach to inspection and compliance.

Section “AA” Recommendation 1

Maintain the current annual reporting system for Class A pits/quarries (by tonnage removed or total disturbance areas) and decrease the frequency of lower risk Class B pits/quarries to a biennial system, and change the ASIA risk values to compensate for decrease in self reporting frequency of Class B pits/quarries. (Most desirable.)

Section “AA” Recommendation 2

If the Province goes forward with changing the frequency is changed to biennial for Class A and triennially for Class B pits/quarries, implement a mandatory Site Plan Update at a six-year frequency, as suggested in the Section “U” Recommendation, and change the ASIA risk values to compensate for the decrease in self-reporting frequency. (Less desirable.)

This would potentially allow for the maintained integrity of the MNRF aggregate inspection program to account for changes in self-reporting requirements.

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Blueprint Section AB

Clarification and development of requirements for site plan amendments is very important. The streamlining of administrative amendments, while clearly defining “significant amendments” is necessary for a risk-based management strategy for consultation requirements.

Section “AB” Recommendation 1

Amendment requests for “significant amendments” should be treated similarly to an application. Significant amendments should be submitted by a qualified expert, and provide information that determines the extent of public consultation.

Section “AB” Recommendation 2

Larger consultation requirements that are similar or identical to new applications should be employed when there are sensitive ecosystems involved, like rivers and streams with spawning beds, significant ravines and valleys, species at risk habitat, etc.

Blueprint Section AC

The OFAH supports the implementation of streamlining strategies for no-impact administrative amendments through notification and self-registration of these amendments.

Blueprint Section AD

The OFAH supports the re-evaluation of fines and administrative penalties, especially as this allows for a diversity of compliance possibilities to reflect with the wide variety of operators, from small farmers with a small pit to large international gravel/construction companies.

Blueprint Section AE

The OFAH believes in the integrity of any compliance model, and the assurance of that integrity. The OFAH supports the decision to consider the falsification of information related to any reporting requirement as a contravention under the Act. This will help ensure the integrity of self-reports provided by the operators.

Blueprint Section AF

The OFAH supports the new compliance tool of a “no consent transfer” of licences and permits on private and public lands away from a non-compliant operator to a new compliant operator. If the security option of **Section “D” Recommendation** are employed, this would provide increased incentive for the compliant behaviour of an operator. If conditions are written in such a way, related to the security, failure to comply with conditions can result in the forfeiture of the security, ensuring the MNRF’s ability to rehabilitate the site if there is no, or limited, interest in the site.

Blueprint Section AG

The OFAH supports the protection of public servants while performing their mandated duties in good faith.

Blueprint Section AH, AI, AJ and AK

The OFAH supports changes related to royalties due to inflation, balancing of minimum fees and royalties to contribute to the Aggregate Resources Trust Fund, and contributions to groups responsible for the maintenance of infrastructure necessary for the operation of pits and quarries.

Blueprint Section AL

The OFAH supports the ability to waive fees on private land as it applies to infrastructure impact, as transport that does not occur on highways should not have to contribute to highway maintenance. Aggregate royalties should still apply as it relates to aggregate being a Crown resource, so a portion of the royalty will likely still apply.

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Section “AL” Recommendation

Clearly define all materials including topsoil, subsoil, overburden, and aggregate that will be associated with a site to allow for easier management of materials for rehabilitation purposes.

As mentioned in the section, there is no specific definition for overburden; therefore, the transportation of overburden between adjacent pits for rehabilitation purposes requires royalty payments, which deters the use of overburden from adjacent pits for rehabilitation purposes.

Blueprint Section AM

The OFAH supports the establishment of mechanisms to effectively and efficiently make changes to fees and the structuring of fee assessment and allocation. This allows for flexibility to adapt to changing economic, political, and possibly environmental climates. That said, **significant changes should still maintain appropriate consultation to ensure transparency, even if these changes do not require royal ascent.**

Blueprint Section AN

The OFAH supports the implementation of reporting requirements for the Aggregate Resources Trust Fund and the transparency/accountability of The Ontario Aggregate Resources Corporation.

Section “AN” Recommendation

Clearly explain the exact mechanisms and processes to be used to make amendments to the Aggregate Resources Trust Agreement.

Further clarification of the authorities to change aspects of the Aggregate Resources Trust Agreement needs to be more clearly explained, as allowing for the ruling party to make significant changes too easily may erode the integrity of the agreement.

Blueprint Section AO

The OFAH supports the movement of application and reporting requirements from the *Aggregate Resources Act* into regulations and policy. The requirement for an approval is a constant and should remain in the Act, but the specifics are subject to changes in best practices, expansions in knowledge and research, political/public climate, developments in other industries, and changes in the natural environment. The placement in lower legislation allows for the flexibility to change with these factors.

Blueprint Section AP

The OFAH supports the consistent definition of terms when they are used across different legislation; therefore, a single source for definitions will improve consistency.

Blueprint Section AQ

The OFAH supports the development of performance reporting structures to ensure accountability, transparency, and to help in the determination of future actions.

Blueprint Section AR

As a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization, the OFAH understands the immense value of education-based compliance strategies. Therefore, the OFAH fully supports the development of a training and certification process for new pit operators. In a model consisting of education, prevention, and enforcement, investment in education will also increase prevention and reduce reliance in reactionary enforcement.

Blueprint Section AS

Blueprint section “AS” is further broken down and only points with recommendations will be covered here.

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Section “AS” Recommendation – Third point

Ministerial presence at Ontario Municipal Board meetings should occur, as some concerns presented by local stakeholders at board hearing are valid, even if initial application acceptance by the MNRF has occurred.

Section “AS” Recommendation – Fourth point

Consultation information is public information, but for a more meaningful consultation more information that is in the application is necessary (e.g. rehabilitation strategies, proximity to sensitive habitat, etc.). As mentioned in General Recommendation 4, an electronic version of the application should be available for stakeholders to review as many individuals and organizations may be interested in topics like water budgeting, cumulative effects, or species at risk impact, but are unable to attend local consultation events.

Section “AS” Recommendation – Sixth point

In conjunction with General Recommendation 1, having more municipal involvement and regulation would make this a moot point, especially as there may be a requirement by the municipality for simultaneous approval of provincial licences and their own permits.

Conclusion

The *Aggregate Resources Act* and associated regulations and policies have been in need of revision to align with current socio-economic structures, and ensure an ability to adapt with the future. The OFAH is in full support of the provincial review of the aggregate resources regulatory system, and thanks the MNRF for the opportunity to contribute to this process. We see this as an opportunity to ensure the conservation and rehabilitation of habitat, and as a way to ensure the sustainable development of one of the most important resources in Ontario. Through the development of novel strategies specific to Ontario and the incorporation of effective management strategies employed in other jurisdictions would allow Ontario to become a leading authority in the management of our aggregate resources.

We look forward to receiving feedback related to our contribution to the development of a significant resource utilization strategy and regulatory structure.

Yours in Conservation,



Robert Cole
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cc: OFAH Board of Directors
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