

CAMQ

Promoting Responsible, Sustainable and Equitable Resource Use
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MEDIA RELEASE

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CAMQ is pleased to announce that their concerns about rural water supplies were heard in a public hearing before *The Standing Committee on Justice Policy* earlier this Spring. In a Queen's Park presentation, CAMQ proposed changes to Bill 39, section 11, and called for protections to all drinking water sources, not just municipal, when considering whether an aggregate licence should be issued or refused. The group drew attention to the 1.6 million Ontario citizens who rely on groundwater (wells) for residential and agricultural use (*2016 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario*), and called for similar protections for rural residents.

Passed after its 3rd reading, and given Royal Assent, on May 10, 2017, Bill 39 now includes language to ensure that 'regard is given to any possible effects on ground and surface water resources, *including on drinking water sources*' when considering whether an aggregate licence should be issued or refused – highlighting the need to ensure that all drinking water (rural and municipal) is protected when seeking aggregate approvals.

CAMQ members are pleased that they have been able to apply their work and experience in seeking protections for local groundwater supplies to increasing provincial awareness of the need to protect rural drinking water sources. Despite four years of attempts by a local quarry operator to address outstanding hydrogeological concerns for the proposed Melrose Quarry, the group has not heard whether the peer reviewer for Tyendinaga Township has given approval. In addition, CAMQ is pleased to learn that the MNRF will direct an upcoming local aggregate licensing decision to the OMB for review, regardless of municipal zoning decision.

Although thrilled with their success at the provincial level, CAMQ members are concerned that local costs to taxpayers continue to mount. To date, approximately \$30,000 have been spent on peer reviews, with few assurances that local groundwater will be protected. CAMQ questions whether a costly OMB could have been prevented if the municipality had acted in a timely manner.

For more information, please contact Sue Munro, Chair, CAMQ (613) 968-5943

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www.citizensagainstmelrosequarry.com