July 11, 2012

Ms. Tamara Pomanski, Clerk
Standing Committee on General Government
Room 1405, Whitney Block
Queen’s Park
TORONTO ON M7A 1A2

Dear Members of the Standing Committee:

**Re: Submission to the Standing Committee on General Government regarding the review of the Aggregate Resources Act**

The Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation is a non-profit, non-government organization that is committed to ensuring the continued environmental health and integrity of our watersheds. The Watershed Trust’s area of interest consists of 50,000 hectares from the Niagara Escarpment to Georgian Bay, encompassing Silver Creek, Black Ash Creek, Townline Creek, Batteaux River, Pretty River, Indian Brook and the Beaver River watersheds. Our goal is to protect, wisely manage and enhance surface and ground water, wetlands, woodlands, fish and wildlife habitat, ravines, valleys and streams in our watersheds. For more information please visit [www.watershedtrust.ca](http://www.watershedtrust.ca)

The *Aggregate Resources Act* is an important piece of legislation affecting ground and surface water, wetlands, woodlands and fish and wildlife habitat. These natural features, including areas such as the Niagara Escarpment, need to be protected for conservation of biodiversity, for their economic values and for our enjoyment.

The Watershed Trust recognizes that aggregate extraction is essential for infrastructure development and that municipalities are significant users of these resources. However, the current focus on the Niagara Escarpment, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, as the primary source of aggregate for the populous areas in Southern Ontario is causing irreparable damage to this vital component of our natural heritage.

In addition, we feel that there is a need to improve the process for Ontario Municipal Board or Environmental Review Tribunal reviews. For example, in the Walker Industries Inc. Duntroon hearing (Case 08-094), the cost to the citizens’ group to oppose the quarry application was over $600,000. The cost to another citizens’ group to oppose the MAQ quarry (Case MM090037) was over $250,000. It is a dysfunctional process if costs to citizens’ groups are so incredibly high in order to make their voices heard effectively.

We also feel some attention should be given to the apparent conflict of interest in the Ministry of Natural Resources in their administration of the ARA while also issuing permits and approvals. Note that the ARA states in s.2. The purposes of this Act are,

(a) to provide for the management of the aggregate resources of Ontario;

(b) to control and regulate aggregate operations on Crown and private lands;

(c) to require the rehabilitation of land from which aggregate has been excavated; and

(d) to minimize adverse impact on the environment in respect of aggregate operations.

The problem is that 2(a) requires management of the resource to ensure sufficient aggregate production while 2(d) is seen as a second order priority.

We thank the government for this opportunity to provide comments on the review of the ARA and trust that the Standing Committee on General Government will take these comments into account. Should you require further information, contact me at 705-445-0357 or bmwt@bmts.com.
Sincerely,

Norman J. Wingrove, CMA, President  
BLUE MOUNTAIN WATERSHED TRUST FOUNDATION