Submission to:
The Standing Committee on General Government
Review of the Aggregate Resources Act

Attention: Sylwia Przezdziecki and Tamara Pomanski,
Room 1405, Whitney Block, Queen’s Park, Toronto, ON, M7A 1A2

July 16, 2012

WHEN PITS & QUARRIES COME TO A COMMUNITY

What happens to the
Value of neighbouring properties, businesses,
& the Quality of community life?

There are enormous impacts financially & otherwise, both to
neighbours & the whole community, if an application is approved.

In support of their license applications to permit extraction, aggregate companies
misrepresent the motives of their neighbours as selfish and obstructionist. For example, at
the Aikensville Pit in Puslinch, Ontario, the gravel pit operator accused neighbours of NIMBY
(not in my backyard) motives in opposing a new mine.

In what appears to be a staggering example of hypocrisy and self-interest the wealthy
applicants neglected to mention an inconvenient truth. Approval of the license
application would immediately have increased the value of the applicant’s land at
the Aikensville Pit by millions of dollars, but for their neighbours it would be a different
story – they would lose millions.
Studies have shown: the value of all neighbouring properties drop the day a pit application is filed. When the mine is approved values drop again. The loss is NEVER restored even though prices may begin to rise again as a result of market forces.

Presently there is no government agency, including the OMB, which has the power to require license applicants to compensate neighbours for the foreseeable negative impacts on their property values, in some cases on their businesses, and on their lifestyles, that occur as a result of the actual license granting process.

Failure to compensate is a form of unjust enrichment that keeps millions of dollars in the hands of the mine owners while their neighbours have to pay the price of diminished property values. The requirement of fair compensation would still allow owners to make reasonable profits from highly lucrative operations. As it stands now, pit owners are enriched at the expense of their neighbours & the wider community.

The good news: Your committee now has an opportunity to rectify these long-standing injustices. You can act responsibly to ensure economic justice by disallowing wealthy private corporations from obtaining huge profits at the expense of their neighbours and the communities in which they operate. If residents must suffer losses to their property values, those who seek to profit must compensate them. The TRUE COSTS must be borne by the operators and must be calculated and incorporated in their business plans by means of Full Cost Accounting.

Now it’s your responsibility to meet the challenge of revising the ARA to serve us well into the coming decades.

Thank you for your diligence and thoroughness on our behalf.

Harvey Rutter
17614 Horseshoe Hill Rd. Caledon ON L7K 2B1
519-927-3930