



environmental
defence
INSPIRING CHANGE

Briefing note re: Responsible Aggregate

Who we are

Environmental Defence is a Canadian environmental charity. We challenge and inspire change in government, business and people to ensure a greener, healthier and prosperous life for all.

Cornerstone Standards Council (CSC) is a charitable organization committed to developing a world-class certification program that establishes a more responsible aggregate materials sector in Canada.

Our objective

Environmental Defence is interested in advancing the "responsible aggregate" industry in Ontario. We have worked with environmental, community, industry, and municipal stakeholders for years to produce a certification system that recognizes sites committed to responsible aggregate practices.

The CSC Standards include 7 Principles and 37 Core Requirements that an aggregate site (pit or quarry) must meet if they wish to be "CSC Certified". Among other things, the Standard requires that an operator proactively engages First Nations and community members, that they protect the natural environment and strengthen our natural heritage systems whenever possible, and that they make sure other impacts are addressed by adopting a series of Standard Operating Procedures.

Certified product is available

Four aggregate operations have successfully achieved CSC Certification: CRH's Acton Quarry, Lafarge's Oro Pit, Miller's Carden Quarry, and CRH's Paris Pit. Ten to fifteen more pits and quarries are pursuing, or are in the early stages of exploring, CSC certification. CSC anticipates providing 25% of the aggregate supply in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) by 2020.

Certified product is available, but buyers are needed to maintain the momentum we have achieved.

The challenge

Some aggregate suppliers wish to see strong demand for certified responsible aggregates before pursuing CSC certification. To help provide certainty for potential CSC Certified producers, Environmental Defence is requesting municipalities in the GGH express a preference for CSC Certified materials over non-certified materials should the cost and availability be equal.

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Municipalities can support responsible aggregate in two ways:

1. Adopt procurement policies that have a preference for CSC aggregate material.
2. Encourage pit operators follow CSC requirements when pursuing zoning amendments to support applications.

What are the benefits of CSC to municipalities?

Trust: Peace of mind that a third-party organization has verified the practices of the site. This trust means fewer issues and less friction with other community members. CSC also opens up two-way communications between site operators and community members and sets out a process for dispute resolution.

Environmental protection: CSC bolsters municipal natural heritage plans and planning. It goes beyond provincial protection of some natural features, like sand barrens, tall grass prairies, and cliffs. It also requires better biodiversity planning, progressive rehabilitation, and environmental net-gain compensation of natural features lost to aggregate development.

Procurement: Through procurement, municipalities can make good on their sustainability objectives by supporting responsible aggregate operations that go beyond regulatory requirements for community engagement and minimizing environmental impacts.

Site screening: Where requested, CSC ensures that certified sites provide funding to municipalities to conduct an independent peer review of proposed operations. This early screening allows for better-informed discussions about potential impacts to the community and environment.

Precedents

The Town of Erin and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority have passed policies that include a preference for CSC Certified aggregate when it is competitively priced and available.

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