

Region still split on Aggregate

by Christine Stanton
 Halton continues to be divided on the proposed Aggregates Act, which would provide new regulations for aggregate extraction in the province.
 The new regulations would mean revenue to the area municipalities and the Region, because a license fee and an extraction fee would be implemented. The aggregate producer would pay four cents per tonne to the area municipality, 1/2 cent per tonne to the Region, 1/2 cent to the abandoned pit and quarry fund to be used for rehabilitation and 1 cent per tonne to the Province.
 The revenue would have meant \$25,000 to Halton last year, but there are some councillors from north Halton who can't support the proposed legislation.
 Northern residents have expressed concern at public meetings on the aggregate issue about the amount of Halton land being

designated for aggregate extraction under the new legislation. They are concerned about the loss of farmland, as well as further scarring of the countryside with abandoned pits and quarries.
 The new Aggregates Act received first and second readings in 1979. Substantial changes were made after the Act had been circulated to municipalities for comment, but the Bill "died" on the order paper when the last provincial election was called and the House adjourned. The revised Aggregates Act has not yet been reintroduced.
 The Region of Peel, concerned over the lost revenue during the delay is asking Halton to endorse its request for the reintroduction of the Bill.
 The planning and public works committee supported the reintroduction recently but without the northern councillors on the committee.

Milton Councillor Bill Johnson and Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller would not support the reintroduction, because it will appear that Halton is thus supporting the Act that northern residents have opposed.
 "We're playing right into the aggregate industry's hands," said Johnson, suggesting that the ministry of natural resources is operating under a guise of rehabilitation. "The ministry hasn't offered anything concrete at all and there is very little protection for farmland and wood lots."
 But Burlington Councillor Pat McLaughlin said the Bill has to be reintroduced to get the issue settled.
 "As long as the Bill is sitting on the shelf, nothing is going for us," he said. "We have to tell them we don't want it sitting on the shelf for the next 20 years and going on with the status quo which is no use to us."
 Burlington Councillor Steve Toth said the

re-introduction is the only way to try to get money set aside for the rehabilitation of pits and quarries.
 Planning director Rash Mohammed explained that Halton asked last year that the ministry hold public meetings in the areas where the aggregate resources are, but has received no answer from them.
 Johnson said it is becoming an election gimmick to provide a lot of public relations, then in the end Halton will get shafted.
 "It will appear to the public we're in support of anything in that Bill which we opposed before," said Miller.
 Committee members decided to request the re-introduction of the Bill and that it be circulated to the area municipalities for comment. They also decided to repeat Halton's previous position which called for public meetings, conducted by the ministry, in the areas where the aggregate is

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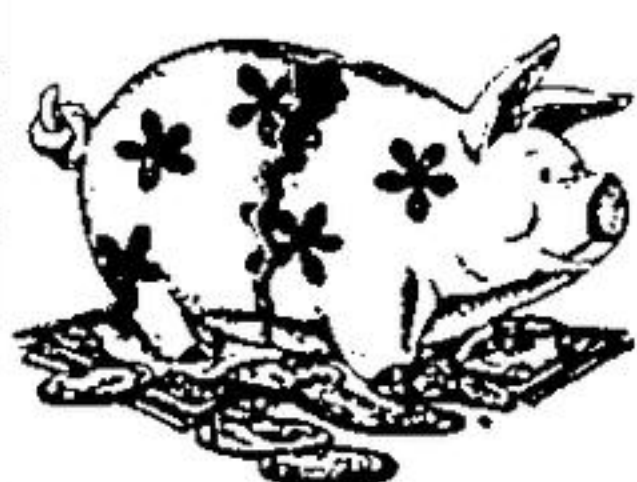
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