

# Acton Quarry landfill plan dumped

History was made last week with the provincial government's announcement that Reclamation Systems Inc. (RSI) must go back and do its homework before its plans to landfill the Acton Quarry can be properly assessed.

"This decision makes them (RSI) go away and follow the rules from now on," Halton Hills lawyer Steven D'Agostino said in an interview Wednesday. "It is an unmitigated victory for us ... it is definitely precedent-setting because this is the first decision to deal with the jurisdiction of the consolidated hearings board in this kind of matter."

"We made history today," was how a beaming Halton Hills mayor Russ Miller described the announcement. "We're absolutely delighted, and proves that we put up a good argument."

It took more than three months for the provincially-appointed consolidated hearings board (CHB) to decide that "this joint board ... does not have the jurisdiction to hear, determine or decide RSI's plans to dump 20 million-plus tonnes of garbage in the Acton Quarry, located at the Third Line and 22 Sideroad. Essentially, the decision forces the private company to go back to the drawing board, to en-

sure that all of the "I's" are dotted and the "T's" are crossed on its applications to the numerous boards and agencies responsible for approving such an undertaking. It can be a costly and lengthy process — something that RSI was trying to avoid.

Despite several efforts to contact RSI officials for comment, they failed to respond before press time.

"The board has accepted our submission that there are rules in place to protect the public interest to ensure proper details are made and disclosed, which RSI has not done," Mr. D'Agostino said.

## Duignan's bill would bury dump proposals

Halton north MPP Noel Duignan wants to "bury" the Acton Quarry dump proposal "once and for all."

Mr. Duignan said last week he will now be pressuring environment minister Ruth Grier and Premier Bob Rae to "bring forward" his private member's bill prohibiting dump sites on the Niagara Escarpment, and make it an "immediate priority."

His bill, which received "first reading" at Queen's Park on June 10, will ban all waste disposal operations on the Escarpment that do

"Hopefully, we've closed the book here ... In my opinion, there is no longer an RSI proposal to deal with unless it does something (substantial). I consider the matter to be closed ... This is the first private proposal for a new landfill, and (the board's decision) shows the industry that detailed environmental evaluations do matter."

A two-week long preliminary hearing was held by the provincial tribunal in early June. The three board members (two from the environmental assessment board, the other from the Ontario municipal board) were asked to decide if a

full-blown, multi-million dollar environmental hearing should take place.

Approximately 38 groups, agencies and private citizens registered their opposition to the dump proposal at the outset of the preliminary hearing. RSI had asked last December that the matter be dealt with by the consolidated hearing board (CHB). The company was hoping that it could expedite the process by cutting through all of the red tape and get one board to approve (or deny) its plans, instead of a multitude of bureaucratic agencies handling it.

not have a license by the time the new legislation comes into force. The bill will only become law if it is unanimously approved by the provincial members of parliament.

If successful, Mr. Duignan is confident that Reclamation Systems Inc.'s plans to dump more than 20 million tonnes of garbage in the Acton site will be "buried once and for all."

During the preliminary hearings held in June, the lawyer for the ministries of environment and natural resources stated for the record that

the province is opposed to RSI's plans. Mr. Duignan said he wants that position to be made official again, and promised to lobby Ms. Grier to make that statement. "The minister has told me all along that she wanted to wait until the hearings are over before she makes any statements," he said. "Well, now the board has made its position clear. (Grier's) personal opinion is there will not be a dump site there (in the Acton Quarry). And, I'll be asking her to state that publicly, now."

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