December 9, 2019

DEЛЕВЕРЕD VIA E-MAIL

The Honourable John Yakabuski
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Whitney Block
Suite 6630, 6th Floor
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3

Dear Minister:

Re: Schedule 16 of Proposed Bill 132 Respecting the Aggregate Resources Act

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) encourages you to consider the impact that proposed amendments to the Aggregate Resources Act could have on protecting groundwater resources in Wellington and Dufferin Counties and the City of Guelph.

Residents of Fergus, Orangeville and Guelph get their drinking water from ground water resources. The proposed amendments could negatively impact the groundwater that supplies these large municipal residential drinking water systems, as well as hundreds of other smaller drinking water systems, and over 30,000 private wells.

In the past, Wellington County, Dufferin County and the City of Guelph have passed zoning by-laws that trigger a zone change application when an operator applies to increase the depth of aggregate extraction. This process enables the municipality to require the submission of studies to assess potential groundwater impacts to prevent negative impacts and protect vital local groundwater resources.

The proposed amendments to Schedule 16 of Bill 132 limits the ability of municipalities to protect their local groundwater, and consequently, valuable drinking water resources. WDGPH believes that municipalities have an important role to play in protecting their local groundwater resources on behalf of their residents and that this oversight role should be maintained.

WDGPH understands that the government wants to protect groundwater resources and therefore encourages you to carefully reconsider amendments to the Aggregate Resources Act that remove municipal authority to use zoning by-laws to regulate the depth of aggregate extraction activities.
Thank you for giving this matter your every consideration.

Sincerely,

George Bridge,
Chair, WDGPH Board of Health

c.c. Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ministry of Health – via e-mail

c.c. Hon. Sylvia Jones, MPP (Dufferin-Caledon) - via e-mail

c.c. Hon. Ted Arnott, MPP (Wellington-Halton-Hills) via e-mail

c.c. Randy Pettapiece, MPP (Perth-Wellington) – via e-mail

c.c. Mike Schreiner, MPP (Guelph) – via e-mail

c.c. Ontario Public Health Units – via e-mail

c.c. Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO (WDGPH) – via e-mail