



# TOWNSHIP OF ZORRA

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## NEWS RELEASE

### Zorra Township Council approves moratorium on new or expanded gravel pits and quarries

*One-year study period will allow Council to seek answers on cumulative impacts of aggregate industry on residents*

#### NEWS

The Council of the Township of Zorra yesterday passed an Interim Control By-law to place a moratorium on new or expanded gravel pits and stone quarries for a one-year period in the Township of Zorra located south of Road 74.

The by-law will prohibit the Township from processing any new zone change applications, new or expanded gravel pits, or stone quarries while a policy review is carried out on the current mineral extraction provisions in the Oxford County Official Plan. This section of the Official Plan considers policies and review criteria to be applied to proposals for new or expanded quarry and sand and gravel licenses. This includes ensuring compatibility with the natural environment, settlement areas and agriculture.

Township Council has taken the step of passing an interim control by-law after experiencing frustration with the lack of coordination and management of aggregate extraction through the approval regulator, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. A recent provincial review of the *Aggregate Resources Act* failed to address how the government would assess the cumulative effects of noise, dust, truck traffic and the overall social economic issues of impacts of concentrating multiple aggregate operations in a small geographic area like those found in aggregate rich regions of Zorra Township.

The Township of Zorra is home to 48 licensed sand, gravel and quarry operations that cumulatively cover approximately 2,730.95 ha (6,748.08 ac) of land. Taken together, these 48 licensed operations are approved for a maximum annual extraction of over 25.4 million tonnes of material. For comparison, this area would cover over 27% of the area of the Town of Richmond Hill and over 10% of the City of Mississauga.

The policy review study is expected to be completed within a one-year time frame as permitted in the Planning Act. The study time frame may be extended for an additional year if needed to complete a more thorough review.

Continued....



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## QUOTES

“The Township recognizes the significant role the aggregate industry has played in Zorra’s development. However, Council’s priority is to put into place a review process that takes into account the various impacts on citizens that live in close proximity to multiple aggregate operations. We realize that Zorra is an aggregate rich municipality; however, our citizens have placed their trust in us when it comes to protecting their health and well being, and we are obligated to act in their best interests.”

- *Margaret Lupton, Mayor of Zorra Township*

“The Township has been lobbying the government since 2006 to put a process in place that takes into cumulative impacts: we had hoped the review of the Aggregate Resources Act would have done so. It is our position that valid concerns raised by Council were ignored, which left the Township no choice but to carry out its own review that aims for more stringent development standards.”

- *Ron Forbes, Deputy Mayor of Zorra Township*

## BACKGROUND

Located in the heart of southwestern Ontario, Zorra Township has a population of approximately 8,300 people in a rural/urban setting. Zorra has been consistently included in the top ten aggregate producing municipalities in Ontario and has been ranked number seven for the past two years.

## MEDIA CONTACT

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