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Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott

MOE launches review of fill disposal policies

In response to repeated requests from Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott and others, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment is launching a review of the Province's handling of the disposal of fill and contaminated soil.

“Last week, I received a letter from the Minister of the Environment informing me that his Ministry has agreed to launch a review of the Province's policies regulating the disposal of fill,” Arnott announced yesterday (Thursday).

According to the letter, the review will take about 12-18 months.

The review comes after Arnott submitted an Application for Review with Ontario's Environmental Commissioner last November.

Over the past couple of years, Arnott has worked with a number of local residents concerned about companies taking advantage of the lack of provincial regulations surrounding fill disposal.

Prior to submitting the Application for Review, Arnott had written to the Minister of Environment three times, requesting that the Minister establish an Interministerial Committee to investigate the problem and come forward with a series of recommendations to address the issue.

“There is currently no province-wide policy regulating the disposal of fill,” Arnott pointed out. “The Provincial Government has always left it up to individual municipalities to provide oversight and there is no process in place to ensure that compromised soil is being disposed of safely.”

“This is an important issue because so much fill is being trucked out of the city and dumped in rural Ontario,” Arnott argued. “We need to make sure that it is safe and that the health of local residents and the safety of our water supply is not being put at risk by degraded or compromised soil.”

MOE Minister Jim Bradley wrote in his letter, “With significant public engagement over the past couple of years, the ministry has developed and is releasing Management of Excess Soil— A Guide for Best Management Practices for managing excess soil on large-scale projects.The ministry’s review will build on the guide, what the ministry heard during consultation and ongoing engagement with the public, stakeholders and other ministries.”

While Arnott is pleased that the Ministry of the Environment is looking into the matter, he was disappointed that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing felt that the matter did not warrant a review by her Ministry.

According to a letter he received from Ministry of Municipal Affairs Deputy Minister Janet Mason, municipalities already have enough authority in the Municipal Act 2001 to regulate the dumping of fill.