

# Northern Waters Presbytery Information Package September 2011

Regarding the Proposed

## **Melancthon Township Mega Quarry**

*As Prepared by the Northern Waters Presbytery  
Peace and Justice Circle*

At the August 30 Governance Commission meeting, the Peace and Justice Circle of Northern Waters Presbytery presented the following proposal seeking support for a moratorium on the Mega Quarry until such time as a full environmental assessment was completed and asking for education around the proposed quarry for local congregations. This proposal was unanimously adopted by the Governance Commission of Northern Waters presbytery.

Within a matter of days, Hon John Wilkinson, Minister of the Environment announced that Highland's Company would be required to undertake a full environmental study. The Peace and Justice Circle rejoices that this decision has been made. At the same time, the Circle believes an ongoing letter writing campaign and education process as well as support for local events is important. This education package has been provided to assist congregations and individuals to participate as they feel called.

The package includes:

- The original proposal submitted to the Governance Commission of Northern Waters Presbytery.
- Background documents and links to websites for more information about the proposed quarry
- Notice of upcoming events asking for community support
- A sample for a letter writing campaign acknowledging the decision to require an environmental assessment and alerting the Minister of the Environment to your ongoing concerns regarding the quarry

If you have any questions or concerns please direct them to the Peace and Justice Circle of Northern Waters Presbytery via Louise Hewson, Administrative Support staff to the presbytery at [lhewson@united-church.ca](mailto:lhewson@united-church.ca).

**Mega Quarry Moratorium**  
**Proposal from the Peace and Justice Circle**  
**Northern Waters Presbytery**

**Statement:**

In keeping with our desire to live with respect in God's creation,  
and

In keeping with The United Church of Canada's stand on just resource extraction,

the Peace and Justice Circle of Northern Waters Presbytery requests the Governance Commission adopt the proposal entitled Mega Quarry Moratorium in response to the development of the Melancthon Mega Quarry as outlined in the Highland Company's application to the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Town of Melancthon until a full Environmental Assessment has been completed.

In order to qualify for such an assessment, the mega quarry must be designated as a "major commercial or business enterprise or activity" under the *Environmental Assessment Act* (EAA). This designation would be appropriate. The proposed mega quarry would be the largest in Ontario's history. It would manipulate about 6 00,000,000 litres of water every day (roughly 100,000 times more than an average "major residential development"), which equates to approximately 25% of all water consumed/used in the Province each day.

**Rationale:**

- The 3,100 page application and supporting documentation cover the narrow requirements of the Aggregate Resources Act but not the further reaching requirements of a full Environmental Assessment as detailed in The Environmental Assessment Act.
- Although a full Environmental Assessment is not mandatory under the Aggregate Resources Act, we view it as irresponsible to go ahead without one when:
  - The quarry development would be the largest in Ontario history
  - Excavate 200 feet below the water table
  - Impact large volumes ( ~ 600 million litres daily) of water with unknown repercussions
  - The proposed mega quarry is at the headwaters of five major river systems in Southern Ontario thereby impacting fish and other aquatic habitat
  - The location, size and scale of this development will result in the loss of prime Ontario farmland, further endangering food security and threatening the local and provincial economy. In addition, the loss of farmland will affect the natural and cultural heritage of the surrounding communities.
  - The United Church of Canada recognizes mining, oil and gas exploitation, and logging often have a negative impact on ecosystems and communities. The United Church of Canada works with its partners in Canada and around the globe to raise concerns about resource extraction issues and to hold companies accountable for human rights violations and ecological destruction.<sup>1</sup>
  - An Environmental Assessment would consider the social, economic and cultural effects of the quarry.

The Peace and Justice Circle requests The Governance Commission of Northern Waters Presbytery support the need for a moratorium and encourage congregations to educate themselves concerning the environmental and community issues related to the proposed quarry, as well as encouraging congregational support and action.

Further, The Peace and Justice Circle requests the Northern Waters Governance Commission communicate with the Living Waters Presbytery, Toronto Southeast Presbytery, and South West Presbytery of Toronto Conference regarding the Mega Quarry and requesting Conference support and advocacy for a moratorium.

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<sup>1</sup> Further Information about The United Church Resource Extraction Policies is available at <http://www.united-church.ca/ecology/resource-extraction>.

MOTION by Mary Elizabeth Piercy/Sue Scottinwood that the Governance Commission of Northern Waters Presbytery adopt the proposal entitled "Mega Quarry Moratorium" requesting a full environmental assessment, and call on Living Water, Toronto Southeast and South West Presbyteries for approval in order to ask Toronto Conference to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples and small rural communities on the national issues of protection of water and resource extraction; in particular at the location (Part of Lots 18 to 23, Concession 1 OS, Part of Lots 18 and 19, Concession 2 OS, Part of Lots 17 to 21, Concession 3 OS; Part of the Original Road Allowance between Lots 20 and 21, Concession 3 OS, and Part of Lots 16 to 19, Concession 4 OS, in the Township of Melancthon, County of Dufferin) of the proposed mega quarry, and encourage congregations and church Courts to support this by letter-writing campaigns, petitions and direct personal action as appropriate.

Carried.

MOTION by Mary Elizabeth Piercy/Linda Thompson that the secretary of Northern Waters Presbytery write a letter to Mr Craig Laing, Aggregate Officer, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources; Hon Premier Dalton McGuinty; Hon. Linda Jeffrey, Minister; Hon. John Wilkinson, Minister of the Environment and The Highland Companies requesting a moratorium on the Mega Quarry (legal address) until a full environmental assessment is completed, with copies to local media.

Carried

### ***Links and background Information***

Minister of the Environment Announcement

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/ene/en/2011/09/statement-from-minister-of-the-environment-john-wilkinson-regarding-highland-companies-proposed-quar.html>

Township Report

<http://melancthontownship.ca/aggregatepdate.htm>

Foodstock Event

<http://canadianchefscongress.com/2011/07/07/foodstock-in-melancthon-township-october-16-2011/>

**Sample Letter**  
**Response to the Environment Minister**

Letters to be sent to the following people:

Hon. Premier Dalton McGuinty  
Room 281 Legislative Building  
Toronto On  
M7A 1A1

Hon. Linda Jeffrey  
Ministry of Natural Resources  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 6630, Whitney Block  
99 Wellesley St W  
Toronto ON  
M7A 1W3

The Highland Company  
PO Box  
Shelburne, ON  
L0N 1J0

Mr Craig Laing  
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources  
Regional Operations Division, Southern Division  
Midhurst District  
Nursery Road  
Midhurst ON  
L0L 1X0  
Fax: 705 725 7584

Hon. John Wilkinson  
Minister of the Environment  
11th Floor ,Ferguson Block  
77 Wellesley St W  
Toronto ON  
M7A 2T5

Dear

I am writing to express my appreciation of the decision by Environment Minister, Hon. John Wilkinson to make Highland Companies subject to the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act. I understand that the company will be required to undertake a comprehensive Environmental Assessment for the proposed quarry in Melancthon Township. I have great concerns about the impact this quarry will have on the environment of the area, particularly on water quality, and the harm it will cause to the local community and their way of life.

It is my hope that a full Environmental Assessment will address concerns related to:

- The size of the quarry
- Excavation 200 feet below the water table
- The impact of diverting large volumes ( ~ 600 million litres daily) of water with unknown repercussions
- The impact on the headwaters of five major river systems in Southern Ontario and the repercussions for fish and other aquatic habitat
- The loss of prime Ontario farmland, further endangering food security and threatening the local and provincial economy and the cultural heritage of the surrounding communities.
- Mining often has a negative impact on ecosystems and communities. Resource extraction issues are often accountable for ecological destruction.

I eagerly await the report of the environmental assessment and will be monitoring your response.

Sincerely