



Socially and Environmentally
Responsible Aggregate

Industry and Environmental Leaders Support New SERA Aggregate Certification System

Draft Aggregate Standards Draws Support from a Range of Leaders

TORONTO, June 17, 2011 /CNW/ - SERA-certified aggregate is a groundbreaking new idea that is gaining momentum with developers, industry, environmentalists and government leaders from across Ontario. This week the Green Party of Ontario, musician Sarah Harmer, the Toronto Environmental Alliance, Evergreen and the Town of Milton have all declared their support for Socially and Environmentally Responsible Aggregate (SERA) and the *Draft* SERA Standards.

Launched on June 1, 2011 the *Draft* SERA Standards are a starting point for developing a voluntary certification system for Ontario's aggregate industry. When implemented, SERA-certification will recognize aggregate sites that go above and beyond government regulations to meet world-class social and environmental standards. Just as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) improved resource management in the forestry sector SERA-certification will provide aggregate producers with market-based incentives to incorporate the highest social and environmental practices into their operations. They will be revised over the next 18 - 24 months but have earned initial praise as "the right path for Ontario's aggregate sector" from many Ontario leaders.

"The initial show of support has been incredible," said Lorne Johnson, Executive Director, SERA. "I've spoken with aggregate producers, environmental and community groups and it is quite clear that Ontario's leaders have wanted a tool like this for quite some time."

In addition to support from environmental groups SERA has been applauded by developers like Mattamy Development and TACC Construction Ltd. who both declared their support last week.

"The positive response to the *Draft* SERA Standards has been very encouraging," said Michael Fenn, Interim Chair, SERA. "Social and environmental progress begins with a catalyst, followed by support from people and groups who can imagine a better way of doing things - a better future. That's what we are seeing: every day, additional opinion leaders step-up and lend their support and expertise to the development of the draft SERA standards. It's very encouraging."

What thought leaders are saying about SERA:

Sarah Harmer, Musician and Protecting Escarpment Rural Land (PERL) Co-Founder

"The SERA concept is an important step in the right direction to providing green gravel and stone in Ontario. I look forward to being part of its development."

Jamie Kirkpatrick, Toronto Environmental Alliance

"Toronto Environmental Alliance sees the Draft SERA Standards as a big step forward in the protection of the GTA countryside. TEA, through our "Dig Conservation, Not Holes" campaign, has been looking for innovative approaches of this nature and we commend Environmental Defence and Holcim for this new approach."

Gord Krantz, Mayor, Milton

"Holcim (Dufferin Aggregates) is a longstanding aggregate operator and a respected member of the Milton business community. It is terrific that a public sector organization like SERA has joined forces with a private sector industry such as Holcim in order to balance public environmental concerns with the needs of the development industry in Ontario. The certification standards proposed by SERA will support and build upon the existing practices and efforts of the Milton Quarry."

Mike Schreiner, Leader, Green Party of Ontario

"It's time for an aggregate certification system in Ontario that truly sets the bar for responsible practices. SERA is the right path for Ontario's aggregate sector and I look forward to seeing other industry and environmental groups becoming involved in this groundbreaking new initiative."

Geoff Cape, Executive Director, Evergreen

"The SERA standards will not only ensure that aggregates are sourced responsibly and destined for reuse or proper disposal, they will also raise awareness of the importance of urban sustainability. Ultimately, it is another step in the right direction to building green, livable cities."

About SERA (www.seracanada.ca)

Socially and Environmentally Responsible Aggregate (SERA) is a not-for-profit organization that aims to create, administer and promote widespread support for certification of responsibly sourced construction materials. Its initial focus is on establishing a voluntary certification system to promote responsibly sourced aggregate materials in Ontario, offering operators an innovative way to demonstrate their efforts to recognize the social and environmental expectations of the local community.

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