



Socially and Environmentally  
Responsible Aggregate

## Momentum Continues to Grow for Socially and Environmentally Responsible Aggregates (SERA)

### *Release of Draft Aggregate Standards Draws Broad Spectrum of Support*

**June 7, 2011, Toronto, Ontario: The Canada Green Building Council, the Mayor of Oakville, and Mattamy Development Corporation** are just three of many eminent groups speaking out in support of the *Draft* SERA Standards that were released last week.

On June 1, 2011 the *Draft* SERA Standards were launched as a starting point in developing a world-class voluntary environmental and social certification system for Ontario's aggregate industry. While the draft standards may have initially arisen out of negotiations between Holcim Inc. and Environmental Defence, according to Michael Fenn, SERA's Interim Chair, "It is SERA's responsibility now to carry the standards forward. Our number one job is to ensure that a broader group of industry, community, environmental and First Nations interests have a say in fleshing them out and finalizing them".

In addition to engaging key stakeholders in finalizing the standards, SERA will also be soliciting input on the design of an independent auditing system that will be used to assess compliance against the standards. According to Lorne Johnson, the new Executive Director of SERA, "Having tough but achievable standards is only half the battle for us. To be truly credible, SERA is going to need a rigorous and independent auditing system with audit teams that are fully arms-length from the aggregate operations they are assessing".

Yesterday BRE Global, an independent and impartial, research-based consultancy, testing and training organization announced its agreement with SERA to support the ongoing development of a Canadian responsible sourcing standard for aggregates. Support for the SERA certification system continues today from industry and environmental leaders across Ontario.

What others are saying about SERA:

#### **Gary Gregoris, Senior VP, Mattamy Development Corporation**

"Mattamy Homes supports construction industry initiatives that contribute to a more sustainable future and healthier planet. The collaborative effort between Environmental Defence and Holcim Canada to create standards for responsibly sourced aggregate shows leadership within the industry in addressing environmental impacts.

We support the direction of the initiative and look forward to working with SERA moving forward."

**Silvio DeGasperi, TACC Construction Ltd.**

It is great to see the industry come together with environmental NGOs and other stakeholders to put something concrete in place. These standards are finally breaking the status quo and pushing the industry to look at the way we do business and make sure it is sustainable for the long-term.

**Gord Miller, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario**

"Over the years my annual reports have emphasized that Ontario's process to approve and regulate aggregate operations needs improvement. With the formation of SERA and the Draft SERA Standards I am encouraged to see traditional adversaries working together to develop an independently auditable certification system that has the power to change the way we think about aggregates."

**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."

**Rob Burton, Mayor, Oakville**

"Oakville has been pleased to be recognized for its environmental leadership in natural heritage protection and progressive land use planning. SERA could play a significant role in reducing the ecological footprint of the aggregate industry and making Oakville a green building centre."

**Linda Jeffrey, MPP and Minister of Natural Resources**

"It is a positive step forward for Ontarians when the business community and environmental organizations come together to work towards a common solution. The efforts by Holcim Canada and Environmental Defence clearly underscore the importance, for the balance between economic prosperity and long term sustainability of our environment and natural resources. Your initiative will be a nice complement to the rigorous regulatory framework under the Aggregate Resources Act which is administered by my Ministry."

**Peter Tabuns, MPP and Ontario NDP Environment Critic**

"The aggregate debate is like the other environmental debates and conflicts that our society deals with. Bringing together historic

adversaries to find a solution makes sense. SERA sets the stage for finding that solution in the aggregate debate and I hope it is successful."

**Steve Parish, Mayor, Ajax**

"SERA is a real step forward for the aggregate debate in Ontario. Any time traditional adversaries come together and try to cooperate on a world-class solution, this has to be good news. And those who purchase aggregate will be the beneficiary of the SERA effort in that they will have access to a greener, independently certified, product."

**Michael McSweeney, President, Cement Association of Canada**

"While a reliable long-term supply of aggregates is essential to the country's infrastructure and the cement and concrete industry's viability, the protection of the environment and quality of life for our communities is also of paramount importance. SERA and its standards will provide our industry with a roadmap for meeting or exceeding world-class social and environmental management practice and, as the standards become broadly adopted, provide the public with tangible assurance that we are doing so. We commend our member Holcim Canada, Environmental Defence, and SERA's other founding board members for their leadership in taking this momentous step forward."

**Janet Sumner, Executive Director, CPAWS-Wildlands League**

"It's all about choice and how to chart a good environmental outcome. Third-party verified environmental and social standards have historically been very successful in offering the private sector and civil society a market-based alternative to navigate controversial resource development questions. SERA's launch of the draft aggregate standards last week is a great first start. We wish SERA the best of luck as it now engages a broader group of interests in helping ensure the standards deliver workable solutions for all stakeholders."

**Neill Lanz, Vice President, Clearview Community Coalition**

"Having just been through a extensive Ontario Municipal Board hearing, at great expense for both our community group and the proponent, I'm thrilled to see the Draft standards. If the standards translate into even one community group and one proponent avoiding what we just went through, then that is already a big win for everyone."

**Stewart Hardacre, President and CEO, Habitat for Humanity Canada**

Habitat for Humanity Canada has a philosophy of transforming communities through leadership and collaboration and the new SERA standards embody a similar approach. We are trying to build communities as sustainably as possible, and working with partners like Holcim Canada that are sourcing materials in an environmentally responsible manner is important to us and the communities we build.

**Dr. Jacqueline Glass, APRES Responsible Sourcing Network Manager, Loughborough University -**

"Being able to reassure customers that the materials they have chosen have been sourced responsibly is a benchmark for any business that wants its sustainability credentials to be taken seriously. This new collaboration, Socially and Environmentally Responsible Aggregates (SERA), between Holcim and Environmental Defence marks a watershed and will undoubtedly propel many organisations in Canada to take stock of their environmental and social practices. By introducing a new standard on responsible sourcing of aggregates, this initiative will raise awareness of sustainability, but will also transform how companies in this sector engage with their communities. This approach brings fresh thinking and hope for a positive future."

**Thomas Esakin, Executive Director, Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy**

"SERA is a welcome advancement for the responsible sourcing of aggregate materials. In March 2011 CIELAP released a report titled *Aggregate Extraction in Ontario: A Strategy for the Future* that called for change and improvements on a range of aggregate issues. We are encouraged that the draft SERA standards directly tackle a number of these important issues"

**Harvey Jones, President, Grey Matters**

"Grey Matters is thrilled by the announcement of the SERA standards. The siting of pits and quarries in Ontario has been one of the largest issue of concern for citizens across the Province for years. Clearly, a more thoughtful approach to resource management is needed. Bravo to Environmental Defence and Holcim for bringing both sides to the table and for creating such a progressive and thoughtful initiative."

**Paul Ostrander, President and CEO, Holcim Canada**

"Aggregate is an important resource that is vital for building the country's infrastructure. SERA will help the aggregate industry to meet the demand for aggregates while meeting community needs and demonstrating measurable efforts to address the social and environmental impacts of pits and quarries."

**Graham Flint, Chairman, Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment (FORCE)**

"This is a pleasant surprise! Enhanced evaluation of aggregate sites and operations, as well as moving beyond minimum regulatory compliance are important principles and directions. We look forward to examining the details in the draft SERA standard and to understanding the stakeholder consultation process for involvement and improvement. At first glance though, there seem to be some good elements. The authors are to be congratulated for launching this initiative."

**Thomas Mueller, President and CEO, Canada Green Building Council**

"We hope that the SERA certification system and management standard will change the way the cement industry sources construction materials across Canada. Adoption of this system will help protect our natural environment from the impacts of resource extraction and involve local communities in the development of long-term management plans."

**Derek Hughes, Responsible Sourcing Scheme Manager, BRE Global**

"A clear and far-sighted initiative such as SERA demonstrates that Canada, through the activities of Holcim (Canada) Inc. and Environmental Defence, intends to be at the forefront of activities to develop an exciting new sustainability tool bringing significant benefits to a wide range of stakeholders within both industry and society."

**Rodney Wilts, Partner, BuildGreen Solutions**

"Following an exhaustive online review BuildGreen Solutions is confident to say that we could find nothing that came close to rivaling the draft SERA standards in terms of rigour or comprehensiveness related to aggregate extraction."

**Penny Richardson, President, The Coalition of Concerned Citizens of Caledon**

"The Coalition of Concerned Citizens of Caledon welcomes the improved industry standards that SERA proposes. This is a real step forward in encouraging long-term planning in the aggregates sector. We are looking forward to exchanging ideas with the SERA Founding Board to ensure that the needs of our community are met."

**Jamie Kirkpatrick, Campaigner, 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."

**Peter Kendall, Executive Director, Schad Foundation**

"The Schad Foundation has a history of supporting projects that protect and restore our natural environment. We are proud to support innovative projects like SERA which will significantly protect and restore wildlife habitat in our most vulnerable areas."

**Maia Becker, Vice President, Forest Stewardship Council Canada**

"The development of a world-class SERA standard and certification system will provide builders with the tools they need to select environmentally and socially responsible construction materials."

**Timothy Gray, Program Director, Ivey Foundation**

"The no-go and net-gain approaches proposed by SERA are a huge step forward for both the aggregate industry and other developments in settled landscapes"

**About SERA ([www.seracanada.ca](http://www.seracanada.ca))**

Socially and Environmentally Responsible Aggregates (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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*For further information, please Contact: Nicholas Schulz, Director of Communications. Tel: 647-883-2719*

*Email: [nschulz@sera.ca](mailto:nschulz@sera.ca)*

*Web: [www.seracanada.ca](http://www.seracanada.ca)*