



OVERVIEW OF THE *DRAFT* SERA STANDARDS

SERA certification is a new approach to ensure Ontario has access to a reliable supply of responsibly sourced construction materials for years to come.

The *Draft* SERA Standards are developed with the understanding that the public has a right to expect aggregate materials that are extracted from appropriate locations in a manner meeting or exceeding world-class environmental and operational practices.

These draft standards are an important starting point for transparent discussions with representatives from the aggregate, environment, community and government sectors as well as with First Nations communities.

SERA encourages aggregate operators to go beyond existing regulatory requirements and not only obtain regulatory licences to operate, but to earn social licences from the community

In creating the *Draft* SERA Standards, efforts have been made to ensure that:

- Its scope is consistent with relevant international norms for both generic (ISO) and sector-specific (UK BRE standards, FSC) corporate social responsibility standards;
- They combine the best elements of both performance-based and management-system based standards;
- They build upon previous and ongoing efforts to develop standards within the aggregate sector; and
- They continue to set a high but achievable bar for what constitutes socially and environmentally responsible aggregate licensing, extraction, operation and rehabilitation.

WHO DEVELOPED THE STANDARDS?

The *Draft* SERA Standards are the result of a collaborative effort between Holcim (Canada) Inc., a leading aggregate company in Canada, and Environmental Defence, an NGO with a long history of leadership on environmental issues, often involving the aggregate industry.

This document is the beginning of a process to establish a voluntary, independently audited, certification system. It is intended that from June 2011 to June 2013 the *Draft* Standards and their implementation will be reviewed and revised by a broader group of stakeholders. It is believed that this approach will better resolve current conflicts, and chart a sustainable and responsible course for aggregate extraction and consumption in Ontario.

How will Environmental Defence and Holcim Canada support SERA?

Environmental Defence and Holcim Canada are confident in the long-term environmental and economic benefits of SERA certification. Representatives from both organizations will serve on the SERA Founding Board and continue to provide input during the SERA Standards consultation process.

Environmental Defence intends to use the Standards as a key part of its decision making process, to determine whether specific aggregate sites should or should not be opposed and, therefore, where Environmental Defence will direct its resources.

Dufferin Aggregates, Holcim Canada's aggregate division, intends to use the *Draft* Standards as guidance for its practices and will pursue certification of all of its pits and quarries.



The SERA Principles

The Draft SERA Standards have been crafted around the dual concepts of Principles and Core Requirements. The Principles are high-level social or environmental outcomes that provide an overall guiding framework for the standards while the Core Requirements are specific actions an applicant would need to take to meet the requirements of the Principle.



The proposed SERA Principles are clarified by their specific Core Requirements. The proposed Core Requirements are available online at www.seracanada.ca

Principle 1: Compliance with laws

Aggregate extraction activities (i.e. identification and siting, footprint design, operation and rehabilitation) meet or exceed the requirements of all applicable laws in the jurisdictions in which they occur.

Principle 2: Community consultation & involvement

Public understanding of aggregate extraction activities is achieved by inclusive and transparent stakeholder involvement in all major steps of the resource development, including siting, footprint design, operations and rehabilitation. No one has all of the answers but collaborative efforts can lead to better solutions, better decisions and better outcomes.

Principle 3: Respect for First Nations rights & culture

The legal, customary and asserted rights of First Nations peoples to protect their cultural heritage and to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources is recognized and respected.

Principle 4: Benefits to local communities & workers

Aggregate extraction activities maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well being of local communities and workers.

Principle 5: Environmental and water impacts & site stewardship

Aggregate extraction activities - their identification, siting, footprint design, operation, rehabilitation, and other ecological initiatives – are designed to protect, restore or improve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources and soils. Extraction activities protect unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and integrity of the area and its connections to the regional landscape.

Principle 6: Resource efficiency

The efficient use and conservation of aggregates and other resources is achieved by putting them to their highest valued use, maximizing the use of recycled content by looking for alternatives to using high quantities of virgin aggregate and, in the medium to long term, developing optimal transportation networks that factor in both financial and environmental costs.

Principle 7: Traceability

Systems are in place to track aggregate from certified operations through to its end use.