



Socially and Environmentally
Responsible Aggregate

A NEW COLLABORATION SETS THE PATH TOWARDS RESPONSIBLY SOURCED CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS IN ONTARIO

Collaboration between Environmental Defence and Holcim Canada leads to a new approach for socially and environmentally responsible pits and quarries in Ontario

June 1, 2011, Toronto, Ontario: Environmental Defence and Holcim Canada have jointly established a not-for-profit organization called "SERA" (Socially and Environmentally Responsible Aggregates) that will create world-class voluntary certification standards for responsibly sourced sand, stone and gravel.

This is an unprecedented collaboration between Environmental Defence, an NGO with a long history of leadership on environmental issues including aggregate siting and Holcim Canada and its aggregate division Dufferin Aggregates, a leading aggregate company in Canada. This unlikely alliance is an enormous step towards resolving conflicts between industry, First Nations and community and environmental groups.

"Aggregate is an important resource that is vital for building the country's infrastructure," said Paul Ostrander, President and CEO, Holcim (Canada) Inc. "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."

In addition to the establishment of SERA, Holcim Canada and Environmental Defence also released today a set of draft standards for socially and environmentally responsible aggregate siting, operation and use.

"SERA is the result of two years of hard work between Environmental Defence and Holcim Canada – it's our best effort to define what leadership looks like for the aggregate industry," said Dr. Rick Smith, Executive Director of Environmental Defence. "Moving forward, we realize that for SERA and these standards to succeed, we need the involvement and support of a broader group of industry, community and environmental groups, and First Nations organizations."

The proposed SERA certification system builds on the experiences of other resource management standards, like Building Research Establishment (BRE) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and provide general Principles and specific Core Requirements that independent certifiers will use to assess an aggregate site's success in meeting or exceeding best management environmental practices.

"Reducing the environmental footprint of construction materials is the next important step in sustainable construction," says Thomas Mueller, President and CEO, Canada Green Building Council. "SERA sets a benchmark for how aggregates

used in cement production are sourced in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.”

The aim is that the *Draft* SERA Standards provide a clear and practical approach for responsibly sourced aggregates offering world-class practices for the siting, rehabilitation and operation of pits and quarries well above what is currently required of industry under Ontario statute. In addition, these standards will also outline responsible resource use and processing.

SERA’s goal is that the SERA Standards will have a transformative effect by contributing to the achievement of:

- A reliable long-term supply of aggregate materials that will be socially and environmentally responsibly sourced;
- Protection of our landscape’s most ecologically and hydrologically important natural areas;
- Meaningful engagement with local communities and First Nations groups before extraction is licensed and throughout the lifecycle of operations;
- A defined time limit for extraction and phase out plans that incorporate communities’ interests;
- The ability of government and private purchasers to leverage their buying power and request responsibly sourced aggregate materials to meet the requirements of new, green building standards and policies;
- A market-based tool for government regulators that recognizes sites that address the social, environmental and water expectations of the local community.

An independent consultant, BuildGreen Solutions, was engaged by SERA staff to conduct an online review of the *Draft* SERA Standards compared with international aggregate standards. BuildGreen Solutions’ research concluded that “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.”

Over the next 18 – 24 months the SERA Founding Board and Executive Director, Lorne Johnson, will be dedicated to engaging government, aggregate operators, environmental groups, municipalities, community groups and First Nations representatives to ensure that the final standards are protective of the natural environment, considerate of local communities and implementable by industry. Johnson has been responsible for successfully coordinating the development of regional and national corporate social responsibility standards for Canada’s forest sector through the FSC and the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement (CBFA).

“Our social legacy depends on reliable sources of aggregate materials for the roads, schools, hospitals and homes built each year. Just as FSC achieved for the forestry sector we need to be sure that the way we utilize our aggregate resources has a minimal impact on our natural environment and community,” says SERA Executive Director, Lorne Johnson. “For the first time in Ontario, SERA offers communities

and operators a way to work together to deliver responsibly sourced aggregate materials.”

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, an aggregate division of Holcim Canada, intends to use the Draft Standards as guidance for its responsible practices. Its intent will be to SERA certify all of its aggregate operations.

About SERA

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.

The Founding Board members – representing industry, community and environmental sectors – include:

- Michael Fenn, Interim Chair
- Maia Becker, Vice President, Forest Stewardship Canada
- Nick Caccavella, Senior Vice President, Holcim (Canada) Inc.
- Bill Galloway, Senior Vice President, Holcim (Canada) Inc.
- Tim Gray, Program Manager, Ivey Foundation
- Peter Kendall, Executive Director, Schad Foundation
- Dr. Rick Smith, Executive Director, Environmental Defence
- Eric Stevenson, Director, Environmental Defence and the Atlantic Salmon Federation

** Four positions on the Founding Board have been left vacant to ensure a broad engagement of stakeholders representing industry, First Nations, community and environmental interests.*

About Holcim (Canada) Inc. (www.holcim.ca)

Holcim (Canada) Inc. is one of the country's largest vertically integrated building materials and construction companies. With 3,000 employees, Holcim Canada manufactures cement, aggregates and ready-mix concrete and provides construction services to many of Canada's largest infrastructure projects. It has a portfolio of brands, including Dufferin in Ontario and Demix in Quebec.

Holcim Canada is a member of the Holcim Group, a Swiss-based multinational with operations in more than 70 countries worldwide. A leading global brand, Holcim is recognized for its long-term financial performance, its environmental leadership, corporate social responsibility and sustainable construction.

About Environmental Defence (www.EnvironmentalDefence.ca)

Environmental Defence is one of Canada's leading environmental action organizations. It challenges, and inspires change in government, business and people to ensure a greener, healthier and prosperous life for all. Environmental Defence has long advocated for protection of Ontario's Greenbelt – the largest in the world – and for more effective land use policies across the country. Since its founding more than twenty five years ago, the organization has worked with countless local communities to combat destructive aggregate projects and modernize laws and policies related to the aggregate industry.

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Quotes Regarding Socially and Environmentally Responsible Aggregates

Thomas Mueller, President and CEO, Canada Green Building Council

"Reducing the environmental footprint of construction materials is the next important step in sustainable construction. SERA sets a benchmark for how aggregates used in cement production are sourced in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way."

Thomas Mueller, President and CEO, Canada Green Building Council

"It is important that all aspects in the extraction, transportation and manufacturing of construction products are considered. SERA as a voluntary certification system for responsibly sourced construction materials is an important step toward redefining how the cement industry can make its products more sustainable."

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."

Tim Gray, Program Manager, Ivey Foundation

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

Derek Hughes, Responsible Sourcing Scheme Manager, Building Research Establishment

“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.”

Derek Hughes, Responsible Sourcing Scheme Manager, Building Research Establishment

“World-wide there is a significant and increasing interest in responsible sourcing initiatives covering a wide range of environmentally sensitive sectors (such as food, timber, paper and fisheries) as well as a clear appetite within society to expand its understanding and management of sustainable and ethical issues within the supply chain all the way down to the extraction of valuable and sensitive materials.”