

Sylvia Jones MPP ? Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act continues to move forward at Queen's Park

My private member's bill, Bill 56, the Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act successfully passed second reading Sept. 26 after receiving support from all parties.

If enacted, this bill would ensure recycled aggregate is fairly considered in all public sector construction work in the Province of Ontario at both the provincial and municipal level. Having passed second reading, Bill 56 has been referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs for public review and amendments.

I am honoured that this bill has received numerous endorsements from industry experts, associations, municipalities and residents, both in Dufferin-Caledon and throughout Ontario. They have expressed their support for Bill 56 because they recognize that this bill can help address both the need for aggregates, while at the same time helping to preserve the finite supply of land from which we extract.

Right now in Ontario, there are nearly three million tonnes of recycled concrete, asphalt and aggregates that, when recycled properly, can be a viable alternative to primary aggregates in construction work. The problem is many public sector organizations currently refuse to consider bids for construction work that propose to use recycled aggregates.

For example, many Ontario municipalities stipulate as part of their Request for Proposal (RFP) process for construction work and road maintenance that bids which use only 100 per cent virgin material, will be considered. That means that contractors bidding for the work cannot incorporate recycled materials in their bids. They must use primary aggregates. The end result is an increase demand for primary aggregates, and stockpiles of recycled and recyclable products continue to grow.

The Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act will give the public sector (municipalities, educational institutions, government departments) a choice and allow for fair consideration of recycled aggregates.

The appropriate testing procedures and standards already exist to ensure that recycled aggregate is as safe and reliable as primary aggregate. The Ministry of Transportation has been using recycled aggregate for years, and other publically-funded institutions should be as well. If a business in Ontario wants to bid on a contract to rebuild or resurface a road, then they should be able to include recycled aggregate in their proposal. Recycled products should be encouraged, and is something the government can help to promote.

Many companies across Ontario already possess the technology to effectively and safely use recycled aggregates in their construction work. It's time the public sector gets on the side of innovation and our environment. It's time for the government to start encouraging the use of aggregate recycling in Ontario.

If you'd like to read the Bill 56, the Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act, please visit my website at www.sylviajonesmpp.ca

