

Sylvia Jones MPP ? Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act is about sustainability and conservation

Every April 22 we celebrate Earth Day by planting trees, pitching in to clean up our communities and raising awareness about the importance of sustainability and conservation.

This year I thought Earth Day was the perfect opportunity to introduce my new private member's bill, Bill 56, the Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act, 2013. The idea behind Bill 56 is that recycled aggregate should be fairly considered for use in construction projects. If passed, this bill would bring equality to the public sector bidding process, because it would ensure that recycled aggregate can be used in construction projects that are paid for with public funds.

Currently, some publicly funded organizations specify in their tenders for construction work that only primary aggregate, otherwise known as virgin, can be used. The problem is that when a Request for Proposal (RFP) stipulates that only bids which use 100 per cent virgin material will be considered, contractors bidding for the work cannot include any recycled material. In these instances, the aggregate they use must be primary aggregate. The end result is increased demand for primary aggregate, while the stockpiles of recycled aggregate continue to grow.

According to Aggregate Recycling Ontario, there is nearly three million tonnes of recycled concrete, asphalt and aggregate that, when recycled properly, can be a viable alternative to primary aggregate in construction work.

The Aggregate Resources Act (ARA) review stopped when the Liberal government prorogued the Ontario Legislature last fall. However, during the review of the ARA, many presenters called on the government to increase the use of recycled aggregate. The Ministry of Transportation has been incorporating recycling product in their road construction and re-building for years, but I believe we can do better.

I believe the Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act will allow us the opportunity to not only discuss this important issue, but also act on a clear consensus coming out of the ARA review. Bill 56 is a practical, do-able solution that could, and should, be supported by the government. If you support increased aggregate recycling in Ontario, then I would urge you to write the Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources and ask them to support Bill 56. Together, we can promote aggregate recycling in Ontario by getting the Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act passed into law.

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

