

Participant Statement of Ron Norris

My name is Ron Norris and I live at 272 West River Road to the northeast of the Paris pit property about two to three kilometers from the gate, a little closer “as the crow flies.” I am married with two grown up children and have lived in the community for about eight years and also run my own company.

I have served as a spokesperson for Concerned Citizens of Brant (CCOB) when CCOB was formed in response to the announced opening of this gravel pit. We are not the first group to oppose this pit, this site has a long history of opposition going back to the 70’s from the Town, the county and another citizens group. In addition to the 300 members of the CCOB there are several community groups that support us, we even had Maude Barlow from Council of Canadians come to speak at one of our rallies. We have had two letter writing campaigns that generated about 1000 letters in the first round and over 1400 letters in a second round when the community responded to the Environmental Registry and to the Environment Ministry – an impressive number from a population of 10-12,000 people.

I do not consider myself an activist. In fact, I consider myself a hardcore capitalist and 4 years ago would have told you I would be the last person on the planet to stand here in front of you. However, as with most of our members once you become informed about the issues it is almost impossible to sit on the sidelines and just let it happen. I felt compelled to get involved for so many reasons:

- * from the 40 year-old license
- * the proximity to our town’s water source
- * the Ministry of Natural Resources overruling our own Source Water Protection committee
- * to allowing impacts on an environmentally sensitive wetland without a proper study.
- * dated standards on contaminants

If I go back to the beginning in 1974 when this Gravel pit was granted its license, the voice of the Town of Paris was never considered in the decision because of a technicality. My understanding was that at the OMB the Town of Paris was not allowed to present their concerns over the town drinking water because at the time the Pit was located in Dumfries County despite the fact that the pit is hundreds of meters away from the town wells. There is a distinct parallel between then and now in that initially both the County and CCOB simply requested the license be reviewed under today’s standards and technology. The response from the MNR was that Dufferin had a valid license and it would not be reviewed. We have a lot

of gravel pits in this area and we are not fighting them all. We are focused on this pit because there are so many elements coming together that it deserves special consideration it is unique. We believe it poses a grave threat to our private and town well water supplies because of the vulnerability of the aquifer, particularly the risk of agro-chemicals and specifically atrazine contamination.

We know a lot has changed in 40 years. We are looking for the application of current technology and science to demonstrate that this community and the environment would not be harmed. A prime example of this is the environmental report used to review the PTTW and the ECA. In this case there are two documents issued by MMM on behalf of Dufferin. The first dated March 16th 2013 was a preliminary investigation, a one and a half page memo, that did not note any significant findings. The second was a more comprehensive and complete study dated Jan 30th 2015 which designated the sensitivity of this wetland as Very High due to numerous observations of SAR's (species at risk) and went further to state it has the potential to qualify as a Significant Wildlife Habitat. This second report was not made available at the subsequent Stakeholders meeting despite the fact that it was published before the Stakeholders meeting. It was not made available to the Community Advisory Panel members despite numerous enquiries, it was not available to the members of this community when we were able to have input to the ECA permit and was not in the list of technical documents relied upon by the MOECC in its decision to grant the ECA. The CCOB obtained a copy only after the Canadian Environmental Law Association filed a Freedom of Information request. The report identifies concerns and critical issues that need to be considered in granting the PTTW and ECA. We are left wondering the extent to which the Environment Ministry considered this report before it granted the PTTW and ECA.

I am aware of efforts since 2009 by the local Source Protection Committee (SPC) to protect our drinking water sources. The SPC, which was established because of the Walkerton Inquiry and a result of the Clean Water Act of 2006. They have called for the practice of digging below the water table and thus increasing the vulnerability of underground aquifers to be identified as a threat to drinking water sources. The Ministry of Natural Resources has consistently refused to accept this recommendation despite the latest motion of the SPC gaining full support of all the chairs of Source Water Protection committees elsewhere in Ontario. In addition, the MOECC's technical expert committee also concluded that the removal of the protective material over the aquifer makes the aquifer more vulnerable. **Wellhead protection areas (WHPA) are rated on the scale of 1 to 10 for vulnerability**

and our WHPA scores a ten, or highest on this scale of vulnerability. At this site, we are proposing to remove 90% of the protective layer and dig a source pond of some 80000 cu.meters that will increase this vulnerability of our aquifer even further. Can you score eleven out of ten on this scale or do you just write off the groundwater?

I guess the point I am trying to make here is that if our aquifer rates a 10 the highest acceptable rating for risk and we are taking actions to increase the risk should we not also be taking additional measures to mitigate the risk or not take these actions in the first place. **Essentially is there not a limit or CAP on the maximum risk that is acceptable for a community to be expected to take with respect to their drinking water for the benefit of industry.**

On behalf of all of the CCOB members, I can say we are very concerned that the environmental compliance approval and the water taking permit issued by the MOECC will contaminate our drinking water supplies. CCOB made submissions on both these matters to the MOECC and a copy of our submissions are attached

It was our experience that minutes for the second and final stakeholder session convened by the Ministry, and recorded by the Ministry, contained numerous errors. In an attempt to correct this situation the CCOB sent a comprehensive document outlining the corrections and no response was ever received from the Ministry in response to our request and to our knowledge no final minutes were issued. To give you an idea of order of magnitude the minutes were 9 pages long and we submitted 6 pages of corrections. The documentation of the content presented was in my opinion a travesty and did not reflect all the information and concerns presented.

In short, CCOB is very concerned that incomplete and erroneous information has been relied upon to grant these two approvals and there is an overall lack of consideration for the long term health of our precious water supply. We understand that some of the things we are asking the MOECC and this tribunal to consider are novel, however the science and the experts clearly describe the risk we are facing. We all know that if these chemicals get into our drinking water that it will be irreversible and monitoring system that these people are proposing is nothing more than a post mortem and will only tell us the patient is dead and there is nothing we can do about it.