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## St. Marys' response under fire

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St. Marys Cement says it will respond within weeks to all 1,200 formal objections to its proposed quarry at 11th Concession East and Milburough Line.

The move, announced in a community newsletter, surprised the anti-quarry group FORCE, which expected the company first to do groundwater testing deemed necessary by a number of public agencies, including the Ministry of Natural Resources, which issues aggregate licences.

FORCE chair Graham Flint accuses St. Marys of "steamrolling ahead ... without first meaningfully addressing and resolving the community's legitimate objections ... ."

While the company has until April 2011 to resolve objections, Flint says the present schedule could see it asking the ministry early next year to approve its licence application or refer it to a public hearing.

But Melanie Horton, speaking for St. Marys, says that's unlikely because it may take much longer to deal with objections from municipalities, conservation authorities and other public agencies.

"Attempts to resolve objections can occur over a series of correspondence or meetings. It's an iterative process."

The company says all objectors who registered during a 45-day notice period last spring will receive responses by regular mail within three to four weeks. Horton says 95 per cent used a FORCE form letter, making it easier to reply.

Three weeks after the first mailing, the company will start sending formal "notices of objector response" by registered mail.

Anyone whose concerns remain unresolved will then have 20 days to re-object and recommend how the company might resolve the issues. Recommendations must be delivered in person or by registered mail.

Horton, who denies trying to accelerate the process, says, "Rather than just sending a letter, we're sending a newsletter first, then a letter by regular mail in advance of the registered letter, extending the time for people to consider their position."

Flint argues that, by demanding recommendations, the company is putting the onus on objectors to improve the quarry proposal.

St. Marys, the Canadian subsidiary of a Brazilian multinational, wants to open what would be Canada's eighth largest limestone quarry, generating more than 1,100 truck trips a day on what are now narrow, rural roads in an area of estate homes and horse farms northeast of Carlisle.

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