

Advice to Minister

Advice to Deputy

Environment and Labour **Briefing Note**

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## **Nova Stone Exporters Inc., Quarry Approval Little River, Digby County**

### **Issue:**

- Attendance of a Public meeting on May 16/02 and invitation to Minister to an additional Public Meeting on June 11/02 re. the operation of a quarry in Little River, Digby County.

### **Key Message:**

- NSDEL will ensure that the company undertakes satisfactory measures to communicate with the public, and will offer to hold a meeting with the committee and Regional Manager.

### **Background:**

- Following the issuance of the approval to Nova Stone Exporters to operate a quarry a group of concerned residents organized a committee and held a public meeting to discuss the project. Representatives of DEL, DFO, and the company were invited and attended. The stated objective of the group was to control or stop the quarry. Approximately 100 people attended.
- Presentations were given by DEL and DFO on the regulatory processes involved, and the terms and conditions of the approval were discussed. The opinions expressed by the public were that standard conditions were insufficient.
- Although representatives of the company were contacted by the committee, they did not send anyone to the meeting. Upon hearing of the meeting late on the 16<sup>th</sup> from DEL, the company's consultant, Paul Buxton, P. Eng., did attend.
- The main concerns raised by the community are listed as follows:
  - Lack of information/consultation about the project & perceived secrecy;
  - Blasting impacts on public safety, structures & water supplies;
  - Noise & dust;
  - Impacts to marine life from blasting & shipping;
  - Impacts to local hydrogeology;
  - Ensuring public consultation should the project exceed 4 ha.;
  - The apparent contradiction between the 3.9 ha. site limitation, and the company's plans to remove aggregate for approx. 30 years;
  - Water use and wastewater discharges.
- Terms and conditions are contained in the approval which address each of the concerns raised.

- Although Mr. Buxton spoke on behalf of the company on environmental concerns he was not able to answer questions on long term plans or business/economic issues. The absence of a company spokesperson who could address all questions created a high degree of frustration and skepticism.
- Communication between DEL and a number of individuals in the open forum setting was difficult. The same questions were asked and answered repeatedly.
- During the closing of the May 16/02 Public Meeting, individuals/representatives specifically expressed that during the next meeting they would like the attendance of various political elected representatives to answer a broad questioning on the roles and processes of provincial and federal departments in quarry operations.

**Recommendation / Current Position:**

- Although DEL representatives can attend the June 11/02 Public Meeting, more progress may be accomplished by the arrangement of a meeting between the area Regional and District Managers and committee/individual representatives of the group.
- DEL gave serious consideration and will invoke Section 11 of the Approval which will require a public information program and community liaison committee.
- Monitor the project to ensure terms and conditions are met.

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