

## **STURGEON COUNTY**

### **GRAVEL PIT RECLAMATION**

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**WHEREAS** the Code of Practice for Pits (made under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, RSA 2000, CE-12, as amended) only applies to a gravel pit that came into operation after August 15, 1978;

**WHEREAS** the Code of Practice for Pits establishes operational, conservation and reclamation requirements, essential for balancing the need for aggregate development with residents' quality of life;

**WHEREAS** many gravel pits across rural Alberta were established prior to August 15, 1978 and therefore, are not subject to the requirements of the Code of Practice for Pits, contributing to many gravel pits being unreclaimed across the rural landscape;

**WHEREAS** there are multiple orphaned and abandoned sites across the Province of Alberta;

**WHEREAS** in many instances, pits established prior to 1978 have been able to operate with development permits that have no expiry and therefore require no plan for reclamation, thereby indefinitely diminishing nearby residents' quality of life;

**WHEREAS** the Community Aggregate Payment Levy amount (\$0.25/tonne) has not been adjusted since 2006,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Environment and Parks amend the Code of Practice for Pits to place the same, or similar requirements on gravel pits established prior to August 15, 1978 as those established afterwards, with the intention of better enforcing the reclamation of gravel pits so as to enhance the quality of life and opportunities for rural residents.

**FURTHER IT BE RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties encourage the Province of Alberta, in reviewing the Community Aggregate Payment Levy Regulation, to explore opportunities to allocate a portion of future funds received from the levy towards reclamation of orphaned and abandoned sites, should the current levy amount be adjusted to reflect current conditions.

#### **Member Background**

Sturgeon County values the benefits the aggregate industry provides to the Province of Alberta, and wishes to continue working with the industry to provide value to residents and community.

Although the industry brings value to the Province and aggregate is a required resource for infrastructure and the prosperity of Alberta residents and businesses, the location and operations of gravel pits oftentimes place constraints on nearby residents' quality of life.

Most industrial partners work to ensure residents' quality of life remains intact to the fullest extent possible, but there are some circumstances, permissible through gaps within the Code of Practice for Pits where such concerns can be ignored, specifically reclamation requirements, for pits established prior to August 15, 1978.

Such operations exist in Sturgeon County and elsewhere in rural Alberta, where a municipality may wish to amend conditions on a development permit governing the operations of a gravel pit in specific regards to when a site must be reclaimed by, but cannot since the pit was established pre-1978. There is often times no incentive for the pit owner to reclaim the site, and much of the impacts on residents' quality of life is able to continue indefinitely.

Through applying the same rules that pertain to post-1978 gravel pits to such sites, Sturgeon County believes these concerns can be addressed.

As the Provincial Government reviews the regulations associated with the *Municipal Government Act* later in 2016, exploring funding models within the Community Aggregate Payment Levy Regulation may be an opportunity to better enforce and provide funding for the reclamation of orphaned and abandoned gravel pit sites. For instance, review of the Regulation could adjust the rate to \$0.35/tonne, with \$0.25/tonne to be provided to the municipality, and \$0.10/tonne to be put towards reclamation efforts.