
Stovel and Associates Inc.
Planners, Agrologists and Environmental Consultants

September 18, 2024

Genevieve Scott
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**RE: Peer Review of AIA – CBM Caledon Quarry
18722 Main Street
Part of Lots 15-18, Concession 4 WSCR
Part of Lot 16, Concession 3 WSCR
(Former geographic Township of Caledon)
Town of Caledon
Region of Peel**

Dear Ms. Scott:

Stovel and Associates Inc. (SAI) was retained by the Town of Caledon to complete a peer review of an Agricultural Impact Assessment (“AIA”) for 18722 Main Street, Town of Caledon, Region of Peel, prepared by Colville Consulting Inc. (“Colville”). The following pages summarize the results of this peer review.

Documentation Reviewed By SAI

The documents reviewed include the following:

- Agricultural Impact Assessment for CBM Caledon Pit/Quarry, Colville Consulting Inc., December 2022 (Revised July 2023).
- *Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario Prime Agricultural Areas: Publication 851*. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2016.
- *Draft Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) Guidance Document*. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2018.
- Site Plans for Caledon Pit & Quarry Part of Lots 15-18, Concession 4 WSCR and Part of Lot 16, Concession 3 WSCR (former geographic Township of Caledon) Town of Caledon, Region of Peel, MHBC, August 2023.

SAI also attended a site visit on June 18, 2024, to review the Subject Site (also called the Primary Study Area in the AIA) and to observe conditions onsite and on surrounding lands (also called the Secondary Study Area in the AIA).

Description of Proposal and the Mineral Aggregate Resource

The development proposal is to licence approximately 261 ha (645.0 acres) for a Class A licence that permits the extraction of mineral aggregate resources above and below the established water table. The annual extraction limit is proposed to be 2.5 million tonnes of aggregate materials annually. The proposed Extraction Area is approximately 200 ha (496.7 acres) and comprises several land holdings.

The Executive Summary of the AIA provides an overview of the proposed mineral aggregate operation. The body of the AIA does not include a detailed description of the mineral aggregate operation, the Site Plan, or other related documents prepared by the applicant's consulting team in Section 10 – References.

The Executive Summary indicates that the proposed Extraction Area includes approximately 78.24 million tonnes of high-quality bedrock resources and approximately 4 million tonnes of high-quality sand and gravel resources.

Description of Prime Agricultural Area

The AIA notes that the Subject Site is partially located in the Prime Agricultural Area ("PAA") as set out in Schedule D-1 (Rural System) of the Region of Peel Official Plan. Lands east of Main Street (Peel Road 136) are not included in the PAA; lands to the west of Peel Road 136 are located within the PAA. Lands to the southeast of the Subject Site are designated Rural Settlement Area (Cataract). A copy of the Land Use Schedule was not included in the AIA.

The AIA does not provide an areal estimate (in hectares) of the portion of the Subject Site that is designated PAA. The Site Plan – Existing Features drawing indicates that the North Area is 30.3 ha in size. The North Area represents the lands east of Main Street. These are the lands that are not designated PAA. The remaining lands, approximately 230.9 ha, are designated PAA. Therefore, approximately 88% of the subject lands are PAA.

The AIA does not provide documentation regarding the accuracy or reasonableness of Schedule D-1 with respect to the Subject Site.

Description of the Onsite Agricultural Lands

Based on a review of background mapping, the AIA provides the following description of agricultural resources that occur onsite (*Table 1, p. 21*):

- Class 2 soils (approximately 119.02 ha or 45.57% of the site);
- Class 4 soils (approximately 135.67 ha or 51.95%);
- Class 5 soils (6.48 ha or 2.48% of the site).

Figure 2, Regional Soil Series Mapping illustrates the limits of the proposed pit/quarry for

the Primary Study Area (“PSA”) and the Secondary Study Area (“SSA”). The proposed extraction limits are also shown on Figure 2, but Table 1 – Regional Soil Series for Primary Study Area does not include estimates for the proposed Extraction Area and the areas of Prime Agricultural Lands within the PAA.

The AIA notes that 45.57% of the site is considered Prime Agricultural Land (pp 23-24).

There is an apparent contradiction in the AIA that the author should clarify, regarding the Canada Land Inventory (CLI) – Soil Capability for Agriculture classification associated with the PSA. A key finding of the AIA relates to the characterization of the quality of soils within the PAA. Throughout much of the AIA, the Subject Site has been described as being comprised mainly of CLI Class 4 soils, which are non-prime agricultural lands.

“It is also worth noting that the majority of the Subject Site do not consist of prime agricultural lands. They are predominantly CLI Class 4 lands.” (Page 10).

On page 33 of the AIA provides calculated Hoffman Productivity Index (“HPI”) values for the Subject Site (also referred to as the Primary Study Area) and a larger surrounding area, referred to as the HPMARA. The Hoffman Productivity Indices (HPI) are used to assign a single value for each soil polygon. The value relates to the agricultural productivity of the soil map unit. The HPI value is determined by the relative percent of each soil capability class present in the soil map unit and provides an equivalent CLI capability class. Text from page 33 of the AIA is provided below.

“As shown in Table 4, the HPI for the larger HPMARA is higher than that of the PSA. The HPMARA lands have an HPI of 0.73 which is equivalent in productivity to CLI Class 2 lands. The PSA has an HPI of 0.64 which is the equivalent in productivity to CLI Class 3 lands. CLI Class 3 lands have the lowest priority for preservation among the prime agricultural lands.”

Table 4: Relative Agricultural Productivity for HPMARA Sites

Site	Area (HA)	Percentage	HPI	Total Productivity Index Range
HPMARA	1484.83	100.00%	0.73	CLI Class 2
PSA	261.17	100.00%	0.64	CLI Class 3

Based on the HPI results set out in the AIA, the amount of land that is considered to be Prime Agricultural Land in a Prime Agricultural Area needs to be clarified, as there are planning policy implications. In addition, the amount of Prime Agricultural Land in the PAA should also be provided based on the proposed extraction limits (i.e., 200 ha). This information is important as the extraction limits are directly related to lands that will be removed from agriculture.

Description of Agricultural Operations and Agricultural Land Uses

Within the PSA, five agricultural operations were identified. These include one active livestock operation (#12), a cash crop operation (#7), two retired livestock operations (#5, and #14), and a remnant livestock operation (#13). Agricultural operation #1 is located just beyond the SSA.

It is noted that the AIA did not include Farm Data Surveys or any documentation from onsite and adjacent farmers. Data obtained from the landowner/farmer would be useful in corroborating the characterizations attributed to each Agricultural operation.

A more detailed description of Farm Operation #1 would also be helpful. This Farm Operation is located northeast of the SSA just beyond the 1.5 km radius. Data related to water needs for livestock and the type/location of the onsite wells would be helpful to ensure that the agricultural infrastructure is protected.

As well, it would be useful to determine if any Nutrient Management Plans are associated with the PSA as these management plans could be impacted by aggregate extraction.

Field crops being grown within the PSA include corn, soybeans, cereal grains (e.g., winter wheat), and pasture/forage crops. Forage crops typically consist of hay and haylage. These crops are typically associated with traditional cash crop and livestock operations. The site visit and reconnaissance land use survey confirmed the Agricultural Land Use mapping and description of Agricultural Operations within the PSA and SSA. The descriptions set out in the AIA for these Agricultural Operations seem reasonable but it would be useful to confirm this information with the landowners/farmers.

Description of Land Improvements

The AIA provides an overview of capital investment related to agriculture. Mapping of artificial tile drainage installations and municipal drains was reviewed. Background mapping does not indicate any tile drainage systems in the PSA or SSA.

Fragmentation of Agricultural Lands

The AIA provides an overview of the lot fabric in the SSA. The report notes on page 30 that *“the majority of the parcels in the area are relatively large and not limited for agricultural uses by their size.”*

The following points of clarification should be provided in the AIA:

- A discussion/comparison of Property Size/Fragmentation for the PSA/SSA nor does the report compare the farm sizes set out in the Census of Agriculture statistics for 2011, 2016 or 2021.

- Discussion concerning the ownership and tenancy of Agricultural parcels within the PSA and SSA – are the farmlands within the PSA and SSA locally owned and operated?
- Discussion concerning the future ownership of the lands associated with the application - will the lands associated with the development will remain in one consolidated land parcel (lot lines merge) or will the existing lot lines be maintained? Will the future ownership and use of the subject property (and adjacent lands owned or leased by the applicant) conform to the uses associated with the PAA or will the development of a large recreational lake area result in pressure to develop the lands for more intensive non-agricultural land uses in the future?

Economic and Community Benefits of Agriculture

The AIA provides an overview of Agricultural statistics related to the number of farms per farm type, employment data and farm value (both for the Region and the Town).

The following paragraph was included in the AIA on page 32:

“Based on our land use survey, it is evident that the amount and distribution of agricultural and agriculture-related uses within the SSA does not reflect the abundance of active farming, crop production and agrifood network employment characteristic of the Region. Only four active livestock operations, two cash crop operations and two hobby farm operations were observed in the SSA. It is unlikely that the active livestock operations significantly contribute economically to the Region.”

The AIA did not provide an opinion with respect to the contribution of the Agricultural activities associated with the subject lands to the economy of the Region and Town.

Environmental Assets

The AIA notes that natural heritage features are located onsite and in the SSA. The AIA references other studies prepared in support of the application for more information related to environmental assets.

Alternative Site Assessment

SAI notes several items that require clarification in this section of the AIA.

Section 5.11 of the AIA provides an Alternative Site Assessment. The AIA states that:

“wherever possible, provincial policy directs that aggregate operations restore lands in prime agricultural areas to an agricultural condition. However, this application is for a Class A Licence (Pit and Quarry Below Water) and it will not be feasible to rehabilitate the lands back to an agricultural condition. The PPS in

Section 2.5.4 requires the applicant to consider alternative locations for proposed extraction based on soil resources. (S. 5.11.1, page 33)”

Section 5.11.2 notes that:

“Policy directs applicants to consider lands on lower capability lands rather than on prime agricultural lands. As has already been discussed, the majority of the PSA already consists of lower capability lands (CLI Classes 4 & 5) which are common in the HPMAPA. To determine whether there are other locations upon which the proposed CBM Caledon Pit / Quarry can be situated in this area on lower capability lands, the AIA assessed the CLI Capability of all lands within the HPMARA shown in Appendix I.” (page 33)

Appendix I provides mapping for the Alternate Site Assessment. The mapping illustrates Active Aggregate Sites within an area much larger than the SSA. There are mapping inaccuracies in the aggregate site mapping. The base layer for the mapping is Physiographic mapping from the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. The Niagara Escarpment Area and settlement areas are not shown on the base layer and the source of natural heritage features mapping is not clear.

Section 5.11.2 provides the results of the Hoffman Productivity Index analysis. As previously stated in this report, the Total Productivity Index Range for the PSA was CLI Class 3. This finding is not consistent with the aforementioned paragraph that states that *“the majority of the PSA already consists of lower capability lands (CLI Classes 4 and 5)”*.

The concluding paragraph of Section 5.11.2 states, *“Based on this analysis, it is unlikely that other alternative sites exist within the HPMARA that will have a lower productivity and lower agricultural capability than the proposed location. The PSA is a reasonable choice of location for the proposed use.”* (Page 33).

Assessment of Impacts to Agriculture

Section 6.1.1 assesses the impact of extraction on the onsite Prime Agricultural land. The AIA notes that 119.02 (45.57%) of Prime Agricultural land (CLI Class 2 lands) will be removed.

This statement appears to be inconsistent with the HPI value report in Table 4 (page 33).

No statement was provided on the area of Prime Agricultural Land in a Prime Agricultural Area that will be removed.

Section 6.1.2 notes that CBM owns/controls 323 ha. A map in the AIA that illustrates what lands are owned vs controlled would be helpful. As there are additional lands in the SSA that are owned/controlled by the applicant, it would be useful to identify these properties.

There is a reference to lands south of the site, so it is assumed that these are the additional properties. The AIA notes that 258 ha are currently cultivated, but clarification as to the extent of lands that will be removed from production would be helpful.

Two active agricultural operations will be retired as a result of this proposed development. One of the operations, No. 12 represents the most significant operation in the SSA. It is understood that the extraction plan intends to progressively develop the site, thus providing several years before Operation No. 12 will need to be removed.

No agricultural land improvements will be impacted by the proposal.

Impacts related to hydrogeology, transportation, noise/dust/vibration are assessed by other technical specialists. The AIA does not provide a statement regarding the ability of the site to handle onsite parking ability for haul trucks or the potential for offsite queuing of trucks on municipal roads. There is one operation that is located just beyond the SSA, No. 1, that should specifically be evaluated by the hydrogeologist to ensure that water resources are protected and a program for monitoring is provided. The AIA should summarize these measures.

Impacts on the Agri-Food Sector and Loss of Community Benefits are considered to be minimal.

Mitigation measures are summarized in Table 5 of the AIA. Mitigation is primarily addressed by other technical specialists.

Agricultural Technical Recommendations

The AIA provides two recommendations:

◆ *Lands that are currently in agricultural production and not required for immediate extraction and site preparation shall be kept in agricultural production for as long as possible.*

◆ *The Licensee shall document any complaints involving the local agricultural community and as part of the annual Compliance Assessment Report shall provide information to MNRF on the nature of the complaint and actions taken by the licensee to address the issue.*

SAI reviewed the Site Plan and these recommendations are included. SAI notes that the Site Plan does not include provisions for soil stripping, soil storage and soil re-application procedures. This should be addressed.

SAI notes that the Site Plan includes a site plan over-ride related to fencing: Site Plan Over-ride No. 3; *Rationale #1: This will enable agricultural production to continue with*

minimal disruption and accounts for the long life expectancy of the operation. The AIA should discuss this provision and describe why this is needed.

The AIA does not reference a maximum disturbed area for the proposed pit/quarry, however, the Site Plan includes a provision to limit disturbance to 95 ha. The AIA should address this requirement.

M. Maximum Disturbed Area

1. The maximum disturbed area is 95.0 hectares. Disturbed areas shall include active extraction areas, stockpile areas, internal haul routes, areas being progressively rehabilitated and berms until they are vegetated. Areas that have been side-sloped and vegetated, and the adjacent un-vegetated or flooded vacated quarry floor (eg. stockpiles and equipment removed), shall not constitute disturbed areas.

Review of Agricultural Policies

Section 2 of the AIA provides an assessment of conformity with agricultural policies contained in the Provincial Policy Statement (“PPS”) 2020, Aggregate Resources Act (“ARA”), Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, Region of Peel Official Plan and Town of Caledon Official Plan. It should be noted that the Province of Ontario issued a Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 under Section 3 of the Planning Act and it will come into effect October 20, 2024. As a result, the agricultural policy review and assessment will need to be updated and revised where appropriate.

i) PPS, 2020

The AIA identifies PPS policy nos. 2.3.6 and 2.5.4 as being relevant agricultural policies. Section 2.1 of the AIA documents that *“the licence application involves a substantial quantity of aggregate extraction below the water table. Therefore, as per 2.5.4.1a) an agricultural rehabilitation plan for the Subject Site is not feasible and will not be required. It is also worth noting that the majority of the Subject Site do not consist of prime agricultural lands. They are predominantly CLI Class 4 lands.”* (Page 10).

SAI Comment on PPS Assessment

The AIA has identified the relevant policies in the PPS that need to be assessed, however, the AIA lacks a full examination of the relevant policies. The reference to the Subject Site consisting of predominantly CLI Class 4 lands requires explanation given the HPI value that was calculated for the lands in question. Further, it is recognized that a portion of the site is considered to be Rural Lands. It is our respectful opinion that the AIA should describe and discuss the area of the site that is in the PAA and the relevant CLI – Soil Capability For Agriculture classification of these lands within the PAA. A further breakdown of the area of the site, within the PAA, that will be extracted should be provided.

There has been limited documentation provided in the AIA that discusses the feasibility of agricultural rehabilitation. It would seem that the consultant has relied on the assumption that since the quarry is proposed to proceed to depths of 8-27 m below the water table, the backfilling of portions of the extraction area is unfeasible. It is noted, however, that substantial backfilling of the South Area and North Area of the proposed quarry is already proposed. These lands are proposed to be rehabilitated to an ecological afteruse. While this assumption may prove to be reasonable, there has been insufficient information provided in the AIA to arrive at this conclusion. Agricultural analysis based on a soils budget would assist in documenting the feasibility of post-extraction rehabilitation.

The AIA does not address satisfactorily the issue of alternatives in the policy section analysis. There is no statement in Section 2.1 of the AIA, that the proposed development is consistent with the PPS in terms of the consideration of alternatives. The relevant policy is stated below (underlining was added by SAI):

"2.5.4.1 In prime agricultural areas, on prime agricultural land, extraction of mineral aggregate resources is permitted as an interim use provided that the site will be rehabilitated back to an agricultural condition.

Complete rehabilitation to an agricultural condition is not required if:

- a) outside of a specialty crop area, there is a substantial quantity of mineral aggregate resources below the water table warranting extraction, or the depth of planned extraction in a quarry makes restoration of pre-extraction agricultural capability unfeasible;*
- b) in a specialty crop area, there is a substantial quantity of high quality mineral aggregate resources below the water table warranting extraction, and the depth of planned extraction makes restoration of pre-extraction agricultural capability unfeasible;*
- c) other alternatives have been considered by the applicant and found unsuitable. The consideration of other alternatives shall include resources in areas of Canada Land Inventory Class 4 through 7 lands, resources on lands identified as designated growth areas, and resources on prime agricultural lands where rehabilitation is feasible. Where no other alternatives are found, prime agricultural lands shall be protected in this order of priority: specialty crop areas, Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2 and 3 lands; and*
- d) agricultural rehabilitation in remaining areas is maximized."*

The AIA should clearly state what portions of the site are considered to meet the requirement of *"In prime agricultural areas, on prime agricultural land."* The apparent inconsistency with the calculated HDI range needs to be resolved. Further, the assessment needs to consider the agricultural capability of the lands within the designated PAA, not just the entire site.

If the Subject Site is deemed to be Prime Agricultural land within a Prime Agricultural area, then the provides set out in 2.5.4.1 a), c) and d) should be examined in detail. Conversely, if the Subject Site is deemed to be non-prime agricultural land, then it would seem that the Alternative Site Location study is not required. Clarification of this matter is required.

ii) Aggregate Resources Act (ARA)

The AIA notes that the ARA provides direction for the management of aggregate resources in Ontario, regulates aggregate operations in the province, lays out requirements for the rehabilitation of extracted land, and aims to minimize adverse impacts on the environment.

SAI Comment on ARA Assessment

The AIA does not address the Matters that a Minister or Tribunal shall have regard to including 12(1) d), f), and g).

iii) Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan ("Growth Plan")

The AIA provides a general overview of the agricultural policy regime that applies to the proposed mineral aggregate application. Reference to policy 4.2.6.3 was provided:

"Where agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses interface outside of the settlement areas, land use compatibility will be achieved by avoiding or where avoidance is not possible, minimizing and mitigating adverse impacts on the Agricultural System. Where mitigation is required, measures should be incorporated as part of the non-agricultural uses, as appropriate within the area being developed. Where appropriate, this should be based on an agricultural impact assessment." (p. 11)

A definition of an Agricultural Impact Assessment was provided and a reference to the Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural Systems for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was noted. The Agricultural Systems mapping for the GGH was documented and this mapping indicated that the Subject Site is part of the agricultural land base to be within a Prime Agricultural Area.

The AIA describes the Agricultural System approach to land use planning. The PSA and SSA are located partially within the Prime Agricultural Area and partially in the Candidate Lands.

The Agri-Food Network (AFN) is also described.

SAI Comment on Growth Plan Assessment

The following contextual description of the Growth Plan describes the approach for addressing policy direction in the Agricultural System.

“The GGH is home to some of Canada’s most important and productive farmland, which is a finite, non-renewable resource. The region’s fertile soil, favourable climate, and access to water make it significant on both a national and international scale. This Plan provides for the identification and protection of the Agricultural System in the GGH. The Agricultural System includes a continuous and productive land base, comprised of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, and rural lands, as well as a complementary agri-food network that together enable the agri-food sector to thrive. Many farms within the Agricultural System also contain important natural heritage and hydrologic features, and farmers play a vital role in their stewardship. Protecting the Agricultural System will support the viability of the agricultural sector as the region grows.”

Policy 4.2.6 of the Growth Plan sets out the principles of the Agricultural System. Each relevant policy of 4.2.6 should be addressed to determine conformity with the agricultural provisions of the Growth Plan.

Policy 4.2.8 sets out policies related to Mineral Aggregate Resources. Several policies in this section of the Growth Plan relate to agricultural resources, i.e., 4.2.8.3, 4.2.8.4 d), and 4.2.8.4.1 a), and should be addressed in the AIA.

As previously noted, the Province of Ontario issued a Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 under Section 3 of the Planning Act and it will come into effect October 20, 2024. The applicability of these provisions under the Growth Plan should be clarified.

iv) Greenbelt Plan

The AIA identifies Policies 3.1.3 and 4.3.2.1-.2 and 4.3.1.4 of the Greenbelt Plan as key policies that will be addressed.

SAI Comment on Greenbelt Plan

Policies 3.1-3.6 inclusive set out the planning framework for the Agricultural System in the Protective Countryside. A summary of each policy within 3.1 should be provided, except policy 3.1.2 as there are no Specialty Crop Areas onsite on the site or in the SSA.

The remaining agricultural-related policies within 4.3.2 should also be addressed including 4.3.2.6 and 4.3.2.7.

v) Region of Peel Official Plan

The AIA references relevant policies and land use schedules in the Region of Peel Official Plan.

SAI Comment on Region of Peel Official Plan

Schedules D-1 Prime Agricultural Area and Rural Land and Schedule D-2 – High Potential Mineral Aggregate Resources Areas should be included in the AIA. The AIA should provide a statement, based on the findings of the AIA, as to the conformity of the proposed mineral aggregate operation to the agricultural-related policies of the Region of Peel Official Plan.

vi) Town of Caledon Official Plan (Caledon Official Plan)

The AIA identifies the relevant policies and land use schedules. The following concluding paragraph was included in the AIA under Section 2.6:

“A significant portion of the Subject Site consists of non-prime agricultural lands. The proposed CBM Caledon Pit/Quarry will result in substantial aggregate extraction below the water table and restoration of pre-extraction capability will be unfeasible. The final rehabilitation will not include plans for a return to an agricultural condition.”

SAI Comment on Town of Caledon Official Plan

The AIA should include mapping of the relevant schedules from the Caledon Official Plan.

The statement, *“A significant portion of the Subject Site consists of non-prime agricultural lands.”* This statement should be operationally defined within the context of the relevant planning policy framework. As previously noted, the HPI results reported in the AIA indicate a Productivity Index Range of CLI Class 3. Further, the statement should be focused on the PAA portion of the subject property and the proportion of Prime Agricultural Lands within the area proposed to be extracted (and not rehabilitated to an agricultural end use) should be documented.

The concluding paragraph should review each portion of Policy 5.11.2.2.9 a)-d) inclusive to assess conformity with the relevant policy framework in the Caledon Official Plan.

The AIA should address the potential for conservation easements on the subject land and adjacent lands owned or under lease by the applicant, as a means to mitigate the potential loss of Prime Agricultural lands in the PAA. The conservation easement policy is set out in OP Policy 5.1.1.22:

5.1.1.22 Conservation Easements for Agricultural Land

5.1.1.22.1 The Town of Caledon will, in conjunction with the Province, Region of Peel, universities and non-government organizations encourage opportunities for the research into the use of conservation easements or other methods to promote agricultural land and to identify and develop partnerships with appropriate granting organizations with the potential to compensate landowners.

Results of Peer Review – General Comments

The following paragraphs summarize the Peer Review comments. In general, the AIA provides a satisfactory description of the agricultural resources onsite and within the Primary and Secondary Study Areas.

There are several items noted in the preceding peer review that require clarification, however, four prevailing themes of the critical examination of AIA prevail:

- Clarification of agricultural capability of the Primary Study Area is needed. The HPI ranges imply that the Subject Site should be considered Prime Agricultural land yet the Soil Capability analysis asserts that the lands should not be considered Prime Agricultural lands. The assessment is further complicated in that only a portion of the Subject Site is designated Rural Lands, while most of the Subject Site is designated to be Prime Agricultural Area. Of note, it would appear that a significant portion of the South Pit Extraction Area appears to be mapped as Class 2 soils. The AIA should provide an aerial breakdown of the Prime Agricultural lands in the Prime Agricultural area, as this will direct the application of relevant agricultural policies. The evaluation should also note which lands will be extracted below the water table, and thus not returned to an agricultural afteruse. In addition, not all of the Subject Site is proposed to be extracted below the water table and these areas that are in the licence but not extracted could be returned to an agricultural condition. In terms of rehabilitation options, a soils budget is recommended to determine the availability of onsite soil resources that could be used for rehabilitation. The overall goal should be to minimize the permanent removal of Prime Agricultural lands within the Prime Agricultural area. If this cannot be achieved, the AIA must provide a detailed examination of the options that were considered and subsequently deemed unviable. However, if the site is deemed not to be Prime Agricultural land within a Prime Agricultural area, then there is no policy requirement to rehabilitate to an agricultural condition.
- The planning policy and ARA component of the AIA, i.e. Section 2 of the AIA, should be re-visited. Given the recent approval of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, the policy assessment should be re-examined and updated accordingly. One of the key objectives of the AIA should be to identify the relevant provincial, regional and local planning policies and other provincial directives and to provide a statement of how each policy provision will be satisfied. With a few exceptions, SAI agrees that most of the relevant agricultural planning policies have been listed in the AIA, however, the assessment of conformity has not been consistently documented. This assessment should be a relatively straightforward exercise. An important outcome of the policy assessment should be the determination of what part of the site is considered to be Prime Agricultural lands

in a Prime Agricultural area.

- The Alternate Site Assessment Figure is not a particularly useful map and it is unclear if the consideration of Alternatives is even required from a policy perspective. The base map should be prepared using CLI – Soil Capability for Agriculture classifications, similar to Figure 2 – Regional Soil Series Mapping that was presented in the AIA, not physiographic units. The illustration of Licensed Pits and Quarries needs to be updated as several sites are mismapped. The Alternative Site Assessment should also include significant Natural Heritage Features. It is also recommended that the limits of the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area be included on the map. The map should also be titled Alternative Site Assessment. As previously noted, the Alternative Site Assessment is not a policy requirement if the site is not considered to be Prime Agricultural Lands within a Prime Agricultural Area.
- Site Plan provisions (and relationship with the provisions of the Aggregate Resources Act) should be evaluated in the AIA. A subsection in the AIA should be dedicated to the consideration of the Site Plan. It is recognized that the Executive Summary provides a detailed examination of the mineral aggregate operation, but information related to the Site Plan appears to be missing. For example, it is noted that soil handling measures have not been included on the Site Plan. Direction from the Agrologist is important to ensure proper stripping, storage and re-application measures. Proper soil handling is important for all forms of land restoration, not just agricultural rehabilitation. In addition, the AIA should address the maximum disturbed area requirement, i.e., 95 ha, in terms of the proposed Phasing program and the objective to ensure interim agricultural production for the lands for as long as practical. Site Plan Override No. 3 discusses the rationale for installing fencing, i.e., *“Rationale #1: This will enable agricultural production to continue with minimal disruption and accounts for the long life expectancy of the operation.”* An explanation in the AIA for this Override would help understand the need for this provision. Technical recommendations set out in the AIA address complaints provisions. Note the Town is not copied. This provision should be reviewed in the AIA to ensure that the interests of farmers and the farm community are adequately addressed on the Site Plan.

Closing

In closing, Stovel and Associates Inc. (“SAI”) completed a peer review of the Agricultural Impact Assessment (“AIA”) prepared in support of an application for a Pit/Quarry operation in the Town of Caledon. The AIA was prepared by Colville Consulting Inc. Mr. Colville is a Professional Agrologist and is deemed to be a Qualified Professional to prepare AIA’s.

The AIA presents a description and inventory of agricultural resources in the Primary and

Secondary Study Area. To a large extent, the AIA provides an adequate characterization of agricultural operations and resources features onsite and on surrounding lands. However, clarification of the extent of Prime Agricultural lands in a Prime Agricultural areas should be provided. This will help determine the relevant planning policies that would apply to the proposed mineral aggregate application. Key planning provisions were documented in the AIA, however, the assessment of conformity with agricultural planning policies is needed given the recent approval of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024. As well, additional input into the Site Plan and ARA provisions from the Professional Agrologist would be beneficial.

At this stage, SAI is of the opinion that the AIA does not meet the requirements set out in the Planning Policy Framework, including the Aggregate Resources Act. Further clarification and documentation is required.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert P. Stovel, M.Sc., M.C.I.P., R.P.P., P. Ag.



Robert L. Stovel, B.Sc.