

CORE Burlington Delegation

Gord Pinard

City of Burlington – October 4th, 2023

Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk and Accountability Committee

Good morning Chair Galbraith and Members of the Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk and Accountability Committee

- My name is Gord Pinard and I am here on behalf of CORE Burlington, a local volunteer organization, with over 1200 active supporters who share concerns about the proposed Nelson quarry expansion on Greenbelt lands.
- You may remember me from the Public Meeting on September 18th where 21 in person delegations and an additional 11 written submissions highlighted the Burlington and Halton community opposition to the Nelson Aggregates expansion application.

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to share with you, one more **very important** piece of information that was not covered in the September 18th meeting related to the endangered salamanders, protected under Ontario's Endangered Species Act. Specifically, CORE Burlington's experts have recently identified an additional, powerful reason for you to oppose this second Nelson quarry application – there are more endangered salamander breeding ponds than anyone suspected.

There is more reason than ever to vote to oppose this massive quarry in one of the most sensitive ecological locations in all of Burlington.

I don't know if you had a chance to read the full JART report and supporting appendices, but I wanted to point out an important unresolved issue, identified by JART...

According to North South Environmental, one of many City of Burlington and Halton Region JART experts, and I quote... *"Concerns remain that salamander trapping was not conducted in the golf course ponds. The ponds should be trapped, as NSE's latest observations indicated that these ponds are similar to*

other human-made ponds that have been observed by NSE staff to support Jefferson Salamander and/or other Ambystomatid salamanders”.

Furthermore, in the Appendix K, North-South Environmental states *"Jefferson's Salamander is a highly elusive species. It is not found unless specific attempts are made to look for it using specific techniques at a specific time of year."*

In the spring of 2023, the CORE Burlington team, with the support of our Biologist, did an extensive salamander field survey on private properties adjacent to the Nelson Mount Nemo quarry. This volunteer, citizen-led effort was undertaken precisely because Nelson and their experts were not doing the work necessary to protect the salamanders.

And the people from North-South Environmental are right – the Jeff's are elusive, the techniques are important, and timing is critical.

During a rainy period in April, working under a collection licence issued by MNRF and under the supervision of the University of Guelph, we deployed multiple minnow traps in multiple locations and during a very specific and narrow 2 week window, we collected and confirmed 15 endangered salamanders in **three newly identified breeding ponds** in the vicinity of the Nelson Quarry.

We knew, from the MNR field studies done in 2007, that the endangered Jefferson and Jefferson dependent unisexual salamanders make the Mt Nemo Plateau home; and we proved in 2023 that the breeding ponds are more extensive than previously known.

Although we did not have access to the Burlington Springs Golf Course, the proposed west quarry extension land, North-South Environmental did; and they concluded that, and I quote... *"The omission of salamander trapping from the golf course ponds risks overlooking the species, which in our opinion, has the potential to breed in the golf course ponds."*

CORE Burlington's citizen's led efforts to protect Mount Nemo raises two additional concerns we'd like Council to address.

- First, now that Premier Ford has declared the Greenbelt permanently protected, we believe it is time to stop allowing new aggregate extraction on Ontario's most protected land.

- Second, we applaud your statements concerning the need for enhanced environmental protection on the Greenbelt and in our Open Spaces - we ask that you consider this new endangered salamander discovery to be further reason to protect Burlington's Greenbelt on Mount Nemo with a permanent Planning Act re-zoning and/or Niagara Escarpment Plan re-designation that will allow Mount Nemo to finally graduate from an industrial past to an ecological future.

Thank you for the opportunity to delegate this morning and to share this important field work with you before you decide on the Nelson Expansion Application.

Photographs from the 2023 salamander field survey conducted by CORE Burlington

