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**\*\* FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE \*\***

## **Bracebridge Council Voting on New Mega-Quarry Proposal**

Council asked to Defer Decision until after the Election

Bracebridge--The Town of Bracebridge, Ontario is a charming area in the beautiful Muskoka region. Within it runs Bonnie Lake Road and an adjacent rural community of residents and local businesses.

Fowler Construction Company Ltd. ("Fowler") owns the Childs Pit/Quarry just off Bonnie Lake Road. It currently extracts 210,000 tonnes per year. Fowler has applied for the Town of Bracebridge Council to allow them to expand and extract up to 2 million tonnes per year.

Tonight a meeting will occur with the Bracebridge Council open to all, starting at 6:30 pm at the Town Council Chambers (also live-streaming online). Some local citizens will speak about their concerns and be heard as they feel they were insufficiently consulted throughout the earlier stages of the application process (most of which took place during the last few years of the Covid pandemic).

"Our community thrives on clean air, water and a mostly quiet environment that is inconsistent with the imposition of a major extraction facility producing 2 million tonnes of aggregate per year", said Ms Laura Pratt.

Ms Pratt, whose family has owned the Bracebridge Golf Club since the 60s, has founded a non-profit corporation called Muskoka Environmental Alliance with some other local residents with the collective goal of preventing or limiting the quarry expansion.

The Town of Bracebridge Council could look significantly different after the next election, including having a new Mayor. The current Council is now for all intents and purposes a "lame-duck".

"This decision to approve a new mega-quarry should be deferred, and the Town should wait until after a new Council is in office", said David Donnelly, a leading environmental lawyer hired by the newly formed group to oppose the quarry.

The current Childs Pit/Quarry as well as the proposed expansion area have several significant natural heritage features and functions including fish habitat, the territory of endangered and threatened species, significant wildlife ecosystems, wetlands, etc. Damaging these would cause harm to the important ecological systems within the Muskoka area.

The traffic would increase substantially if the expansion requested were approved. With double the size of the quarry, and considering they have a licence for unlimited 24/7 extraction, there would be a considerable increase in trucks along the haul route of Hwy 117 and Muskoka Road 46 (Bonnie Lake Road).

Those living and working near quarry operations have reason to fear future blasting nearby. Experts agree that even a minor miscalculation in setting a charge can have catastrophic consequences i.e., dangerous flyrock. While until now blasting has not occurred for a long time, the expansion seems likely to change this and cause a dangerous and dramatic difference in the area.

The Town Council should defer this decision, more studies should be conducted considering the impact of covid on the initial findings and consulting properly with the local residents who would be affected, and ultimately the expansion requested is far too large and would change the very essence of Bonnie Lake Road and the surrounding neighbourhoods

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