

Strada Aggregates – Update

Melancthon Quarry Expansion Application

Public Comment Period Closed

The 60-day public comment period for Strada Aggregates' quarry licence application closed on November 10, 2025.

This mandatory consultation phase under the Aggregate Resources Act (ARA) allows residents, municipalities, agencies, and Indigenous communities to review the full application and supporting technical studies and to submit formal comments to both Strada and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR).

Strada is now preparing the required **Summary of Consultation**, which will document all comments received and explain how each issue has been addressed or resolved. Any revised site plans or additional studies will be submitted to MNR in the coming months as part of the statutory review process.

We thank all participants for their time and input. Updates on the ministry's review timeline will continue to be posted at stradaquarry.com.

Next Steps: Independent Peer Reviews Under the ARA

Many people are familiar with the 60-day comment period and the eventual licensing decision. Less visible—but critically important—is the **independent peer review** of the technical studies submitted with every major quarry application.

Peer review acts as a third-party stress-test of the findings in the applicant's reports and is one of the main safeguards built into Ontario's approval process.

What Is Peer Review?

Peer review is a formal, independent evaluation of the technical studies submitted by the applicant—including hydrogeology, natural environment, noise, air quality, traffic, blasting, archaeology, and agriculture.

Key features:

- Reviewers must be fully independent and professionally accredited (e.g., P.Geo., P.Eng.).
- Peer review is required for major applications.
- The applicant funds the review, but the reviewers' work is directed by MNR and technical agencies.
- All peer review correspondence and final conclusions are public.

Which Studies Are Typically Peer Reviewed?

For the Melancthon quarry application, peer review commonly applies to:

1. **Hydrogeology** – Evaluating potential effects on wells, wetlands, streams, and groundwater flow.
2. **Natural Environment** – Assessing species at risk, wetlands, and significant woodlands.
3. **Noise and Air Quality** – Ensuring compliance with Ministry of Environment (MECP) guidelines.
4. **Blasting and Vibration** – Required when blasting is part of the operation.
5. **Agricultural Impact Assessment**
6. **Archaeological Assessments**

How the Peer Review Process Works

1. **Submission of Technical Reports**
Strada submitted its full set of technical studies on September 11, 2025.
2. **Identification of Review Needs**
MNR and technical agencies (MECP, conservation authorities, municipalities) identify questions or determine which reports require peer review.
3. **Selection of Peer Reviewers**
Strada proposes a shortlist of qualified firms. MNR and commenting agencies must agree to the final choices.
4. **Terms of Reference (TOR)**
A detailed TOR is jointly developed, listing the specific questions reviewers must address—for example, whether predicted groundwater drawdowns are realistic under drought conditions.
5. **Review Period (60–120 Days)**
Reviewers analyze the studies, request data, run their own models, and, if needed, recommend additional fieldwork. All correspondence is public.
6. **Peer Review Report Issued**
The reviewer submits a final report to MNR, which is posted to the Environmental Registry. It identifies supported conclusions, deficiencies, and recommended conditions.
7. **Applicant Response**
Strada must either revise its reports to address reviewer comments or provide a formal explanation. Most applications go through at least one round of revisions.

Pre-Application Peer Review with NDACT (2022–2025)

The upcoming peer reviews are not the first for this project.

From December 2022 to mid-2025, Strada undertook a **voluntary, three-year independent peer review process** with the North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce (NDACT) before filing its ARA application.

Under the 2022 Community Engagement Agreement:

- Strada funded independent experts retained by NDACT in hydrogeology, noise, blasting, and air quality.
- NDACT's hydrogeologist, **Garry Hunter (Hunter & Associates)**, reviewed groundwater and drawdown modelling throughout the period.
- Strada agreed not to file an ARA application if peer review identified "unreasonable adverse environmental effects."
- NDACT agreed not to oppose the application if there were no such impacts identified.

Hunter's final reports raised questions regarding predicted well drawdowns and potential stream-flow reductions. As provided for in the agreement, those issues were referred to **binding arbitration**.

During arbitration, two additional independent hydrogeologists—one selected by NDACT and one by Strada—reviewed the outstanding concerns. Both concluded that the hydrogeological issues had been adequately addressed.

NDACT subsequently confirmed it had no further objections under the 2022 agreement.

This earlier peer review helped resolve major technical questions before the statutory review began.

Where Things Stand Now

The statutory ARA peer review process is now underway.

Strada will continue to provide quarterly updates as the ministry's technical review progresses.

For more information and access to application materials, please visit stradaquarry.com.