

The Other Side of the Aggregate Supply Story

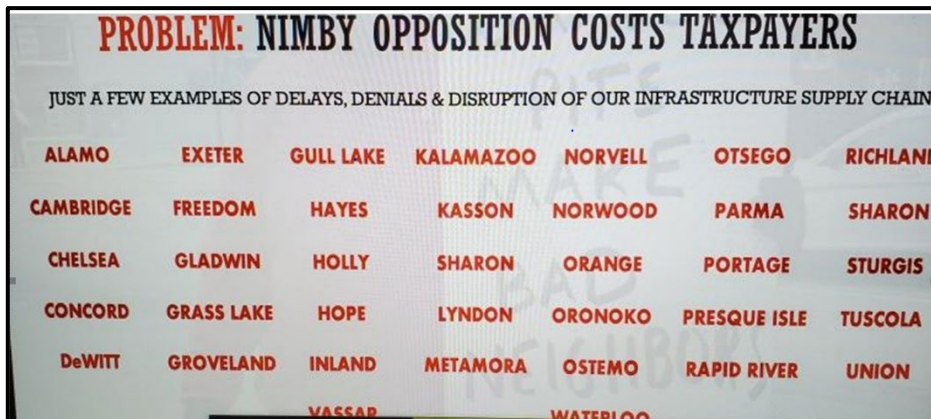
Sharon Preservation Society represents the large number of Sharon Township residents that oppose HB 4526-4527-4528:

- Committee members have already heard from some Sharon Township residents in the last few days, by email or phone.
- We have appended comments from several others.
- We 13 pages of comments from many other residents that opposed SB 429-431, the virtually identical bills introduced in the last session.

There is another side, of course, to the story this committee has heard from the Michigan Aggregate Association (MAA).

Sharon Township residents' perspective is different – AND just as worthy of your attention and consideration as that of a well-funded lobbying organization.

You have seen this slide, presented by the Michigan Aggregate Association to garner support for these bills:



PROBLEM: NIMBY OPPOSITION COSTS TAXPAYERS						
JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF DELAYS, DENIALS & DISRUPTION OF OUR INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPLY CHAIN						
ALAMO	EXETER	GULL LAKE	KALAMAZOO	NORVELL	OTSEGO	RICHLAND
CAMBRIDGE	FREEDOM	HAYES	KASSON	NORWOOD	PARMA	SHARON
CHELSEA	GLADWIN	HOLLY	SHARON	ORANGE	PORTAGE	STURGIS
CONCORD	GRASS LAKE	HOPE	LYNDON	ORONOKO	PRESQUE ISLE	TUSCOLA
DeWITT	GROVELAND	INLAND	METAMORA	OSTEMO	RAPID RIVER	UNION
	VASSAR			WATERLOO		

This information is – at best – disingenuous and misleading:

- **First, Sharon Township, whose name appears twice in this slide, has not denied a single gravel mining permit, and the accusation of “delay” is not warranted.** In fact, last year, Sharon Township approved an expansion to an existing mine in an area already zoned for extraction. Our township is currently reviewing another application for a very large mine (400 acres), the largest one considered in Washtenaw County. This application deserves a very careful and stringent review - **our township officials, elected to have our best interests at heart, are following our ordinance and balancing need and harm.** For good reason – the volumes of information submitted by the applicant are not entirely credible. They are many misleading, unsubstantiated, or untrue claims that would otherwise be ignored.
- **The MAA broadly and indiscriminately applies the NIMBY label to any community that has reason to oppose the introduction of a new gravel mine. There are many very good reasons to**



oppose a mine. They are currently outlined in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. The reasons are fair and reasonable, and balanced against the need for the material.

- **Many of these “delays” are caused by the mining operators themselves**, who have found it too burdensome to prove the gravel is needed, or that the mine won’t cause harm. In our township, the active and proposed mines are subsidiaries of very large, highly profitable, multi-national corporations. They can better afford to shoulder the burden of proof than Michigan’s residents.
- **Well-regulated, locally controlled gravel mining does NOT cost taxpayers anything.** Yes, it is more expensive to ship gravel longer distances when needed, but the cost of material is NOT the most significant expense in a road project. This was presented in earlier years’ testimony opposing bills that aimed to remove local control of aggregate mining.

Finally, about MAA’s offensive use of the NIMBY label:

If everyone’s “backyards” were all ten-miles wide, no one’s health, safety, well-being, or economic investment would suffer from living next to a gravel pit.

In a public hearing in our township attended by nearly 200 residents, **a person closely affiliated with the MAA** spoke on behalf of the mining organization that is applying to mine 400 acres here. **The meeting was recorded.** This person, who should have known better, stated on the record that they lived near a gravel mine and found it to be no problem at all.

In fact, this MAA-affiliate lives at least **ten miles** from the nearest gravel mine.

Alas, these bills would allow active mining operations (digging, crushing) **500 feet** from a residence, from 6AM to 7pm on week days, and 6AM to 5pm on Saturdays.

Please think about this when you only hear one side of the story. We don’t all have 10 mile wide “back yards.”



TO: Members of the Regulatory Reform Committee
FROM: Collected Comments from Manchester-area Residents
DATE: 08-MAY-2023
RE: HB 4526, 4527, 4528

PLEASE send the following message to the Regulatory Reform Committee from Sarah Laskowski, 17720 W Pleasant Lk Rd, Manchester, MI. 48158,

RE: Housebills 4526, 4527, 4528

These bills are wrong for the state and its citizens in so many ways:

- 1) they replace the current state zoning law that fairly balances need for the aggregate with harm to a community;
- 2) they attempt to solve a problem that doesn't exist - there is no evidence the state is running out of gravel;
- 3) they strip control from local governments— favoring the interests of aggregate mine operators (typically large, highly profitable, multi-national organizations) over ordinary, taxpaying citizens;
- 4) they don't consider the use of sustainable practices, like using recycled aggregate materials, which can be used to reduce the cost and need for "virgin" aggregate.

PLEASE VOTE NO!!!!!!!

Dear Sharon Preservation: Please, please forward the following comments to those you deem of importance. Sincerely, Roger H Kappler, 19163 Bethel Church Rd, Manchester, MI 48158. 734-883-1885

Dear Representative and/or Senator:

Approximately 15,000 years ago almost all of the state of Michigan was covered by glaciers (commonly known as the Ice Age). The movement of ice and snow caused scouring and mixing of the earth's crust creating large deposits of rocks, gravel and sand all across the state. There is no lack of such deposits. Additionally this year somewhere in the world the 8 billionth living human being will be born. During the 1960's the 4 billionth living human was born sparking the widely held view that we would not be able to adequately feed this large a population. By the grace of God and advent



of better seeds and agriculture production methods massive starvation has not occurred. This does however accentuate the dire need to make informed land use decisions. This is further exacerbated by climate change altering the productive capacity of agricultural lands world wide.

The proposed legislation considers none of this important rather it exposes land use to the whim and fancy of the mining industry. It totally ignores the input and values of local citizens. It is a serious error to think the mining industry will act in the public interest or consider the need of land use for agriculture, sustainable energy production or any other none mining interest. This very flawed attempt at only special interest public policy should be rejected out of hand. I strongly urge you to reject this blatant attempt at self interest with lack of consent by local citizens. This would be just another form of environmental injustice sanctioned by government.

Respectfully submitted, Roger H Kappler, both a Veteran and father of a Field Grade Special Operations Officer

Below is a copy of the email I sent to Rep. Carrie Rheingans and Senator Sue Shink (I also copied Gov. Whitmer). Feel free to distribute it to other legislators you feel could benefit from my input.

Rep. Rheingans and Senator Shink:

I understand a set of bills (HB 2526, 2527, 2528) is currently in the Regulatory Reform Committee and propose removing local control over mining operations in Michigan. I am strongly OPPOSED to these bills and urge you to vote NO should they (or something similar) come before you for a vote. The elimination of local control over high-profile, high-impact businesses like the sand and gravel industry would be a travesty, and a slap in the face to local government and its residents.

WE are the ones who live with the consequences of poorly permitted and/or poorly regulated mining operations. I live in Freedom Township which currently has three (3) such mines. Many nearby residents have borne the brunt of that mining for years – noise, dust, poor air quality, truck loads, etc. The list goes on. Those residents have had their ability to fully enjoy their property severely limited; their quality of life diminished.

And yet, I think how much WORSE it could have been had our township government not provided proper permitting and oversight of those mines. There is no state agency that can possibly understand and protect our local needs like our own local government.



It's a slippery slope to take away local control from our local governments. Mining this time, then what's next? I agree with the Michigan Townships Association which opposes this legislation, and I strongly urge you to also oppose HB 2526, 2527, and 2528.

Carol Westfall
11268 Hieber Rd.
Manchester, MI 48158
734-657-3880

To Whom It May Concern;

According to the State of Michigan, there is no need for more aggregate mining in this State. The State of Michigan has asked the road building companies to recycle as many materials as possible for road building and repair.

PURE MICHIGAN recognizes the need to stop the pollution of our water resources especially in watershed areas such as Sharon Township and the general Manchester area where the Raisin River flows. Once polluted, there is NEVER a full recovery to clean water. Any type of pollution endangers human life with cancer causing chemicals (natural and manufactured by-products) by mining companies. Natural wildlife is also endangered by the release of these chemicals.

Our Federal and State governments across the nation have publicly announced efforts to safeguard our environmental resources: the air, water and ground in order to protect human and wild life. How can our legislators willfully violate such a public trust? They have been given the responsibility, by the voters, to protect our lives by protecting the TOTAL environment in which we live and share with all the world's creatures. Everyone is aware of the careless greed of large corporations: look at what has happened in Ohio, Michigan, Colorado where there has been irreparable damage to human life, ground, water and air resources. The consequences of corporate disasters are permanent and devastating to every person and creature in the immediate area and beyond. The consequences last for years and can prove deadly to all life. The media coverage has proven to the public that corporations make and break promises because of their greed for profit and the lack of personnel to hold these corporations to federal, state and local laws. Unfortunately all of the safeguards, contractual agreements, oversites and regulations are often overlooked, allowed to expire or are unenforceable in spite of governmental regulations. This must stop.

Such disregard for the citizens of this country is the fault of our legislators who are responsible for the lives and health of the citizens and environmental resources. There should be adequate funding and hiring of competent people, continuous training of Federal, State and local personnel. There must be local control over which corporations



are allowed to operate in communities and what safeguards and laws/ordinances they must follow. Local communities have the right to determine if there will be harmful consequences by corporate activities and must have the final say if and when a corporation can continue to operate if it violates community ordinances. The local community must also be allowed to impose laws regarding clean up, reclamation of land and have the power to force corporations to follow local ordinances. The people who vote in that community should have the final say, without punitive consequences, for wanting to protect their lives and natural resources. When will our legislators back up the voters? When will our Governor back up the residents of this State? When will the public be allowed to know what monies, favors, services etc legislators have been given by these corporations for allowing them to destroy our environment and the health of our communities?

The protection of human life and wildlife is embedded in our democratic process. Local control over corporations' activities, environmental standards and restoration and/or clean up is the pinnacle of our democratic process which should never be compromised under any circumstances. Local control must be the ultimate concern of those who are elected to safeguard the citizens and environment in this State. Those who violate this trust should be investigated and ousted from office. Voters should have the final say over who is protecting our lives and environment, not corporations or legislators who are easily influenced and take money, gifts, travel, or other favors from corporations.

Sincerely,
Claudia A. Damian
Hashley Rd

Manchester MI