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Mr. Bob Betcher
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Groundwater and Water Well Act submission.

We are pleased that the Act formulated almost 50 years ago is being updated to reflect current realities.

We would ask that particular attention be given to the study of how to best manage, protect and sustain the gravel zone aquifers.

Our concern is for the Bird's Hill and the Moose Nose aquifers that are co-joined in the RM of Springfield. They are a water source for many residents including the towns of Oakbank and Dugald (which are served by two shallow wells in a gravel substrate - map attached).

These aquifers are at risk due to:

A) Gravel mining that is:

- 1) Aggressively mining without regard to required buffer zones.
- 2) Uncontrolled in their dewatering, gravel washing and deep water dredging.
- 3) Rife with careless petroleum storage and handling practices.
- 4) Able to side step current regulations without serious penalties for breaches.
- 5) Uninformed as to the high porosity and transmissibility of the media they are working in.

B) The decommissioned Hillside dumpsite (NE5-12-5E) that:

- 1) Is a toxic repository of pesticides, old batteries, dioxins, etc., from 40 years of uncontrolled dumping.
- 2) Has been breached by gravel excavation and is extruding debris.
- 3) Is open to water penetration due to a lack of required maintenance of the impermeable cover.
- 4) Required observations are not carried out as the monitoring wells are unserviceable.
- 5) Residential well tests are now showing evidence of site leachate elements.

6) Prodding of municipal and provincial officials has not resolved this serious contamination hazard.

It would appear that existing regulations such as they are, are not being abided by or properly enforced. We assume that our situation is duplicated across the province leaving our water sources in jeopardy.

Therefore measures need also to be set out so that the new Act with its associated regulations do not succumb to the same malaise.

The sad story in too many communities is that their aquifers are irreversibly contaminated through ignorance, neglect, poor regulations and weak enforcement.

We would also ask that cemetery practices be reviewed as to where they are located and their burial processes (embalming) that have the potential to compromise a water source.

We commend you to your task in setting out protection initiatives that will preserve our water sources for the long term.

On behalf of concerned residents of Springfield,
Darryl Speer

