



AGGREGATE & READY MIX

ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA

Testimony to House Mining and Outdoor Recreation Committee – January 27, 2015

Thank- you Mr. Chair and Committee Members.

I am Fred Corrigan. Executive Director of the Aggregate & Ready Mix Association of Minnesota, a state-wide association representing aggregate and ready mix producers. The MN Industrial Sand Council is a Council that has been created within our association to represent aggregate producers who are also involved in mining industrial sand.

Our association has worked with the legislature since 1950 to clarify the regulation of the aggregates industry including industrial sand. Most recently the industry worked with the Legislative Aggregate Task Force for more than a year to produce a comprehensive report on the industry to the legislature in 2000, and to revise and increase the aggregate tax in 2008. The Task Force Report and subsequent work by the non-metallic mining industry, the state legislature and state agencies has successfully regulated this industry through local controls and state agency permits. Substantial efforts have been made by the legislature and local governments to introduce aggregate resource protection into local comprehensive planning and land use controls and protect aggregate resources including industrial sand pursuant to Mn Statutes 84.94. These efforts have also expanded the ability of the DNR Commissioner to issue or grant new leases to prospect for, mine, or remove silica sand from any lands owned by the state, including, but not limited to, school trust lands, tax-forfeited lands, acquired lands, and the beds of navigable waters at the same time as the DNR has been charged with increasing revenues from school land leases.

Our members have non-metallic mining operations in the majority of Minnesota's 87 counties. These companies have been mining sand and gravel in some cases for more than 100 years. Industrial sand has been mined for glass production and foundry use for most of those years. It's our understanding there are only 8 industrial sand mining and/or processing operations in Minnesota at this time. Currently proposed non- metallic mining operations above 20 acres need to complete an EAW and those over 160 acres are required to complete an EIS. While the existing Minnesota review process has made Minnesota a safe place to mine and live, it can be a long process. The Minnesota Industrial Sand Council was formed so as to bring science based solutions and recommendations to the agency's and the legislature. At this hearing you have over 300 years of mining experience represented by companies currently mining industrial sand in Minnesota or in the permitting process to mine industrial sand. By conducting an EAW you address all concerns regardless of the geographic location of a mine in the state.

The membership of the Aggregate & Ready Mix Association strongly supports continued local control of the non-metallic mining industry. We also appreciate the working relationship our industry has with the DNR, MPCA and EQB in updating best management practices and continue to participate in the multi-agency silica sand rulemaking advisory panel established by the 2013 legislature.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing – we are excited to have this new house committee to work with and look forward to working with the Chair and members of the committee on mining issues in Minnesota.