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## **Ontario Aggregate Forum Collaborates on Industry-Wide Standards and Certification Program**

**TORONTO (June 1, 2011)** – Ontario’s environmental NGO community and aggregate producers, collectively known as The Aggregate Forum, today announced that they have retained Deloitte, one of Canada’s leading management companies, to develop a certification program that will enhance standards of environmental stewardship and community engagement across Ontario’s aggregate industry.

“The aggregate industry and six environmental organizations have been collaborating on a certification framework, The Change Agenda, since early 2008, and we have been communicating with the provincial government, municipalities, and other interested stakeholders,” said Moreen Miller, President of the Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA).

“Irrespective of the agreement between Holcim Ltd. and Environmental Defence, we feel that it is critical for us to put in place a program that has the involvement and support of a broad group that reflects the consensus of a wide constituency of environmental, community, industry, and provincial and municipal interests,” said Caroline Schultz, Executive Director of Ontario Nature, “It is essential to have a process that communities can trust.”

The agreement between Holcim and Environmental Defence announced earlier today was developed independently, and OSSGA and the Forum ENGOS were not aware of nor involved in this activity. Environmental Defence was invited to join The Ontario Aggregate Forum in 2008, and declined. Holcim resigned from the Forum in March of 2011.

In 2008, OSSGA began a series of meetings with environmental NGOs in Ontario to discuss ideas for future collaboration on non-renewable resource management in the province. Meetings continued in 2009 and resulted in the formation of the Ontario Aggregate Forum. The six participating ENGOS are Ontario Nature, STORM (Save the Oak Ridges Moraine), Nature Conservancy Canada, Gravel Watch Ontario, CONE (Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment), and Couchiching Conservancy.

The industry and environmental NGO initiative, called the Change Agenda, will work with Deloitte, through a \$100,000 research program, to assess the best models of independent certification for aggregate producers, including the draft materials released today.

The proposed development of a certification program for aggregate operators in Ontario is in response to the public’s increased expectation for businesses to understand, accept and

incorporate the concept of corporate social responsibility into their decision-making processes that potentially impact the surrounding community, including the environment.

Membership and certification of operations/sites is intended to demonstrate that the participating business has committed to undertake an enhanced level of environmental stewardship and community engagement.

Standards will be developed for the approval, operation, and rehabilitation of aggregate quarries and pits in the province, and will likely include: conservation lands, biodiversity conservation; water management; progressive and final rehabilitation; recycling; community engagement; scheduling and operations; environmental research; education and awareness; carbon neutrality; community planning processes; and energy use and conservation.

The certification program would also include requirements for best practices training, reporting and compliance audits and incentives for participation in the program. The goal of the certification program is to identify industry practices that lead to outcomes which exceed existing legislative and regulatory requirements.

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For further information, please contact:

### **The Ontario Aggregate Forum**

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