

A Message of Township Wide Concern

A Quarry in Lower Milford Would:

- Generate Very Little Tax Revenue
 - Devalue Our Properties
- Cause an Increase in Our Township, County and School District Taxes for Everyone

For More Information, Please Read On

Dear Lower Milford Resident,

We are writing to share this important information with you concerning an issue that can and would touch every property owner in this Township. It is an issue that could cause a severe negative impact on our financial stability and the safety of our residents. That township wide concern is a stone quarry in Lower Milford Township. Geryville Materials, Inc. is applying to our Township Zoning Hearing Board to locate an approximately 100 acre stone quarry with a concrete batch plant and asphalt plant on Mill Hill. At the same time, Geryville Materials, Inc. is challenging the Township's Zoning Ordinance to permit the entire 628 acre property to be quarried. That is a big quarry, close to one square mile. A handful of individuals are outspoken in their support of a quarry and show their support for a quarry by trying to convince everyone else that it is not worth spending money in the short term to avoid long-term harm to the community.

Before we look at the actual safety concerns, let's look at the financial impacts. There is the, "a quarry generates tax revenue" myth. In Lehigh County, stone quarries are assessed for real estate taxes as "industrial" land. This means that the tax money generated from mining the land as a stone quarry is no higher than if it were vacant with weeds growing on it. The concrete plant and asphalt plant are considered by the county assessment office as equipment and are not assessed at all! **So the reality is, that Lower Milford Township would only receive approximately \$2,500 in additional real estate taxes on a 100 acre quarry site above what we now receive as farmland.**

Studies have been conducted across the country of the effects on property values in communities with stone quarries. The information below can be found at www.crushthequarry.org in the slide presentation, "Influences of Rock Quarrying Activities," and shows the estimated percent of decrease in property values at certain distances from a stone quarry. This study was conducted by Dr. Hite, an economist with the Auburn University, who has written extensively on property value impact.

Residential properties at one half mile	-	20% decrease
Residential properties at one mile	-	14.5% decrease
Residential properties at two miles	-	8.9% decrease
Residential properties at three miles	-	4.9% decrease

These numbers indicate that properties on Judy Lane, which is approximately in the center of the township, could be devalued if a quarry would begin operation in Lower Milford Township. A \$500,000 home within one mile of the quarry could be devalued by \$72,500. Now, multiply the devaluation of all these homes and properties by the number affected and the Township will lose a significant amount of tax money; certainly many times more than the \$2,500 additional taxes the quarry would pay. This phenomenon has occurred in communities relatively close to home. For example, Lower Milford resident and Embassy Bank President, Dave Lobach, at a Board of Supervisors meeting on October 21, 2010, advised those in attendance that in the Nazareth area, a quarry caused property values to plummet to the point that the municipality was forced to raise taxes to make up for the lost revenue. This loss in tax money will not only impact Township revenue but County and School District revenue as well. This means Township, County and School District property taxes will be increased on EVERYONE to recover the loss.

Then there are the danger factors. Did you know that in Pennsylvania, quarries are not required by the Department of Environmental Protection to provide a fence around the site? They are required to construct

earthen berms but not fences. Even though the state's "Stay Out, Stay Alive" program attempts to educate on the dangers of quarries and mines, every year, there are deaths or injuries as a result of trespassing adults and children on quarry and mining properties.

The Lower Milford Elementary School is three miles from the proposed quarry site and in line with the prevailing winds which will carry dust, laden with particulate matter. Our children will breathe this dust everyday they attend school; our children from every corner of the Township.

Our children's school buses will travel Limeport Pike, whether to the elementary, intermediate, middle or high school and be forced to assume the risks of traveling with quarry trucks, one every 90 seconds entering or exiting the quarry site. Hundreds of trucks will be added to our narrow country roads including tankers of asphalt and Portland cement arriving at the quarry to produce black top and concrete for delivery. Did you know that according to PENNDOT statistics, King's Highway, at this point in time, has a six times higher accident rate than other roads of its classification? All quarry traffic must use King's Highway before accessing Limeport Pike. What will the accident rate be then? This significant increase in truck traffic will cause delays and impact everyone's drive to work or school.

The hazards of a quarry on Mill Hill in Lower Milford Township are very real. Although the devaluing of property and homes increases the closer you are to the quarry, the resulting tax increases will be the same on every resident of Lower Milford Township. Then there are the real, physical hazards of having a dangerous quarry pit and hundreds of trucks on our country roads risking the safety of our children, families and everyone who visits our Township.

PA State Senator Bob Mensch, in a Southern Lehigh Tribune article posted October 26, 2010, was clear in his opposition to a quarry locating on Mill Hill in Lower Milford Township. He felt the site should be preserved and described the quarry proposal as, "very problematic."

In a letter to all Lower Milford residents, PA State Representative Justin Simmons stated, ". . . you will find no bigger ally in the fight to keep a quarry out of Lower Milford Township."

Our Township Supervisors are concerned for the future financial stability of the Township and are very aware of long-term impacts. Your local government is the only level of government that is close to the people and has a real interest in our health, safety and welfare. Supervisors live in the township and are our neighbors, not a lawmaker in Harrisburg or Washington D.C.

The Lower Milford Resident's Association (LMRA) existed long before a quarry application came to Lower Milford. We have worked hard for our fellow residents over many years. We provided additional legal representation for the welfare of our residents when a trailer park was proposed and a 200-bed nursing home and high density assisted care facility outside of Limeport. The LMRA supported the Township's efforts to find an affordable sewerage solution for our Limeport Village, which in turn will support economic growth in the village, thus increasing property values for the folks of Limeport.

The Lower Milford Residents Association has been vigilant in the struggle to keep our rural community a wonderful place to live and raise our families. All of us, as residents of Lower Milford, must stick together and continue to be vigilant throughout the remaining process of the quarry challenge. The struggle will not last forever, but the impacts of a quarry would last for many generations.

This letter is a CALL TO ACTION!! PLEASE consider doing the following:

1. Join LMRA. Use the attached membership form. Bring your completed form and check to the General Membership Meeting on May 3 at 8 p.m.

2. As a member, you are eligible to attend our GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING on TUESDAY, MAY 3, 2011 AT 8 P.M. AT THE LOWER MILFORD TOWNSHIP BUILDING. Agenda items include real estate expert information, status of current litigation, fund raising efforts, comments and questions from members, and other reports by board members.
3. A meeting preceding our General Membership meeting has been set as a “Lower Milford Candidates’ Forum” to be held at the Lower Milford Fire Company at 7 p.m. Please consider attending.
4. Please attend township meetings when you can! There are many choices monthly. . .zoning hearing board, curative amendment hearings, board of supervisors meetings, planning commission meetings. Check our website at www.crushthequarry.org for meeting dates and times.
5. Vote in the primary election on May 17. Use your vote wisely to elect candidates who will understand and take prudent actions to preserve and protect Lower Milford township for all residents.

We will continue to work diligently to preserve the integrity, beauty, safety, and quality of life for all neighbors who reside in Lower Milford Township! We look forward to seeing all LMRA members at 8 p.m. on May 3 at our General Membership Meeting at the township building.

Sincerely,

Lower Milford Residents’ Association Board of Directors

Don Weinberger
Lori Sickenberger
Bob Myers
Candy Tomes
Dick Hate
Sally Tankred
Paul Shellaway
Shirley Selgrath
Bill Sickenberger
Mike McDonnell
Tom Ermlich
Carol Myers