

Approaching Exhaustion of Rock, Sand, and Crushed Stone in the Twin Cities Metro Area

According to an inventory conducted by the University of Minnesota, the twin cities metro area will run out of rock, sand, gravel, and crushed stone by 2029.

This is according to an inventory of aggregate resources in the metro area that was completed in the year 2000. The inventory was conducted by the University of Minnesota, the Metropolitan Council, and the Minnesota Geological Survey.

We are headed for dramatic reductions in the availability of the literal building blocks of our communities. The ripple effects of which will reverberate throughout the State.

We have the means to reduce CO2 emissions by 10,000 metric tons per year and to reduce traffic by 6 million vehicle miles traveled per year, with nearly no effort or disruption of daily life.

On average, Minnesotans require 8 tons of aggregate materials per person per year to sustain our quality of life. That's 30 million tons per year needed in the metro area alone and almost 47 million tons per year needed for the entire State. If all that tonnage were loaded onto semi-trucks at today's legal limit, the line of trucks would circle the globe.

Sections 1-3 clarify existing law and allow for full implementation of the intended purpose, which is to reduce the VMT and CO2 emissions within our industry's fleet. ARM estimates that the implementation of the special permit to its fullest would represent a reduction of 10,000 metric tons per year in CO2 emissions and a reduction in vehicle miles traveled of 6 million per year.

MnDOT is currently conducting a study through the University of Minnesota to examine the impact on CO2 emissions by increasing all truck weight limits.

Aggregates must be treated as locally available natural resources necessary for every community's vitality.

Affordability of housing, maintenance of critical infrastructure, economic development, and much more are dependent on low-cost construction materials. The economic cost of trucking begins to exceed the cost of aggregate production after about 20 miles of haul distance.

Section 4 prevents local communities from enacting shadow bans on mining out of misperceptions about aggregate mining operations or out of not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) thinking.

It is also critical that we stretch our existing resources by recycling every bit of concrete and asphalt possible, which means prevention of limitations on their use without reasoned, scientific justification. Knee-jerk reactions to unsubstantiated fears must not interfere with responsible use of materials like Recycled Concrete Aggregate (RCA) and Recycled Asphalt Pavement (RAP).

The Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) reported in January of 2025 that to plan for use and protection of aggregate resources the legislature should provide greater support and direction to local governments.

Tax resources must be appropriately sustained to address current and future environmental and infrastructure needs.

The current aggregate taxes allowed for counties and some townships must serve the intended environmental and infrastructure purposes.

Section 5 directs the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) to audit aggregate taxes currently allowed under Minnesota Statute section 298.75.

We need to better understand our current level of resources in the metro area and update the projected timeline for exhaustion of those resources.

Section 6 appropriates \$250,000 for update of the metro area aggregate resource inventory (originally published in 2000).