

PERSPECTIVE:

The ROCKS Act

Rebuilding Our Communities by Keeping Aggregates Sustainable

NSSGA[®]
NATIONAL STONE, SAND
& GRAVEL ASSOCIATION

Stone, sand and gravel or aggregates are an essential component of national and state economic development enterprise and our everyday lives, as they form the base of our homes, schools, businesses and infrastructure. In fact, next to water, aggregates are the second highest used resource on planet earth. When communities have sustainable access to these critical materials it ensures lower construction costs and better social and environmental outcomes as we build a more resilient infrastructure for our future.

Unfortunately, in many areas of the country, communities have failed to recognize the importance of locally available aggregates resources and purposefully or inadvertently prohibited quarry development or allowed community development to overlay or encroach upon aggregates deposits rendering them unusable.

Eliminating access to this important construction material has unintended consequences that have hardly been considered, including an obvious impact on public works budgets and diminishing infrastructure and economic development. The further trucks must drive to complete hauls of aggregates to construction sites significantly increases construction costs and leads to more congestion, traffic and emissions on our roads. Accessing aggregates is critical to developing the infrastructure needed for improving our communities and environment as they are used in renewable energy sources, erosion and flood control, navigation, wetland and stream restoration, water storage, filtration for water and wastewater treatment, landfill creation, and air purification.

The Rebuilding Our Communities by Keeping Aggregates Sustainable (ROCKS) Act will establish a working group of federal, state and local stakeholders to examine the use of aggregates and ensure that policy makers are taking into account access to identifiable aggregates as we invest in infrastructure development.

Key to the success of the ROCKS Act and ensuring smart policies that promote aggregates sustainability are State Geologic Surveys who partner with stakeholders to provide the necessary knowledge to make informed planning decisions. It is also imperative that state, federal and tribal geologists are able to

IN BRIEF:

The Rebuilding Our Communities by Keeping Aggregates Sustainable (ROCKS) Act requires:

1. Studying the use of aggregates resources in federally funded transportation and construction projects and how the proximity of aggregates resources impacts cost and environmental impact of these projects.
2. Examining how states, tribes and local transportation and planning agencies may consider aggregates resources when developing transportation and construction projects.
3. Identifying measures, the federal government, states, tribes and local transportation and planning agencies may take to preserve currently identified aggregates resources for future development.

The ROCKS Act has received the support of the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association (NSSGA) and the Association of American State Geologists (AASG).

receive needed support through the annual appropriations process to evaluate the location of known sources of aggregates, identify and delineate new aggregates resources, and ensure that our communities are able to have validated information to manage the sustainable access to these important resources.

ABOUT NSSGA: Aggregates are the second most utilized product in the world and are the foundation to create buildings, roads, airports and bridges. They are indispensable in developing the infrastructure needed to access clean water; deliver reliable energy; and advance environmental stewardship. The National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (NSSGA) represents more than 90 percent of the crushed stone and 70 percent of the sand and gravel produced annually in the United States.

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