



Ontario construction groups launch video series on excess soil management

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In southern Ontario, the management and use of excess soil is a growing issue. There has long been concerns of unscrupulous players wrongly classifying contaminated soil as excess soil and managing it incorrectly. Likewise, there has been long-standing concerns expressed by those wanting to do the right thing of ambiguous and uncertain rules with respect to determining what is excess soil and how to manage it. As a result, honest industry participants end up hauling excess soil to landfill that could have otherwise been utilized for useful purposes.



According to data compiled by the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario ([RCCAO](#)), Ontario's construction market generates almost 26 million cubic metres of excess

construction soil every year. About \$2 billion is spent annually to manage excess soil – which comes from civil infrastructure projects such as transit, roads, bridges, sewers, watermains and other utilities. Even though most municipal roadways contain only minor amounts of salt from winter road treatment, large quantities of soil are often hauled up to 100 kilometres away to designated dump sites, rather than being reused on site or at other nearby construction sites.

“Clean excess soil can be more responsibly managed through better upfront planning,” says Andy Manahan, executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario ([RCCAO](#)). “That’s why we co-produced a three-part video series to increase awareness that there are alternatives to the ‘dig, haul long distances and dump’ approach.”

RCCAO teamed up with the Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association ([GTSWCA](#)) to produce this video series to inform the public, government and industry on the benefits of using best management practices. It’s called “[The Real Dirt on Dirt: Solutions for Construction Soil Management](#).”

There are a lot of trucks on the road travelling 60 to 100 kilometres to dump excess soil as a waste material – and that is completely wrong, says Giovanni Cautillo, executive director of GTSWCA.

“It’s not a waste – it’s a reusable resource,” Cautillo says. “When municipalities provide guidance to contractors about where soil from local infrastructure projects can be reused, the costs of handling and disposing of soil can be dramatically reduced. Wherever possible, soil should be reused onsite, but if this is not possible, having an approved reuse site within a close distance saves taxpayers money.”

When best management practices are used, there are fewer trucks travelling long distances, causing less wear and tear to the roads – and less traffic congestion. Fewer trucks on the road reduces greenhouse gas emissions, creating a cleaner, healthier environment.

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) is currently reviewing draft regulations to help improve ways to manage soil on building and infrastructure projects across the province. Manahan says that “a multi-ministry approach – environment, municipal affairs, transportation, infrastructure and others – will also help to achieve a more coordinated effort.”