

# **Department of Transportation and Infrastructure**

Blue Cove Quarry Management Area

Environmental Assessment Registration

Submitted to:

Minister of Environment, Conservation and Climate Change

P.O. Box 8700

St. John's NL A1B 4J6

**Attention:** Director of Environmental Assessment

**June 2026**

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## 1. Name of the Undertaking

Blue Cove Quarry Management Area

## 2. Proponent

### 2.1 Name of Corporate Body

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

### 2.2 Address

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure  
Confederation Building (West Block)  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's NL  
A1B 4J6

### 2.3 Minister

Hon. Barry Petten  
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure  
P.O. Box 8700  
Prince Philip Drive  
Confederation Building  
St. John's, NL  
A1B 4J6

### 2.4 Principal Contact Persons

Jennifer Organ, Transportation and Infrastructure Geologist Lead  
And Jessica Rideout, Transportation Infrastructure Geologist  
Mineral Lands Division, Department of Energy and Mines  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's NL  
A1B 4J6  
Phone number: 709-729-1664  
Email: TIQuarries@gov.nl.ca

### 3. The Undertaking

#### 3.1 Name of the Undertaking

The proposed project involves the use of an existing bedrock quarry known as the Blue Cove Quarry Management Area operated by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (TI) (Mineral Lands file number 71113457). The existing site has served as a source of aggregate for provincial infrastructure projects for the past number of years, supporting highway construction and maintenance activities throughout the region.

#### 3.2 Purpose/Rationale/Need for the Undertaking

Quarry materials are non-renewable resources that are critical to the development and maintenance of infrastructure throughout the province. The quality of these materials is crucial to the longevity of infrastructure such as roads and bridges. Using inadequate quarry materials may lead to premature deterioration of infrastructure, thereby reducing the planned life-cycle and increasing maintenance requirements. This can ultimately impact costs incurred by the province through more frequent procurement requirements to repair and maintain infrastructure.

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure and the Mineral Lands Division of the Department of Energy and Mines are committed to acquiring and maintaining Crown quarry sites throughout the province to facilitate TI's infrastructure projects. Securing access to quarry materials that have physical properties suitable to produce aggregate products required for infrastructure projects such as granular and hot mix paving aggregates will reduce the risk of bidding contractors by having quarries available once a contract is awarded.

The bedrock in the Blue Cove quarry management area (QMA) has been in use to support road construction and maintenance projects within the region since the mid 1990's. Bedrock in this area is in high demand for use as aggregate due to its physical properties, which meet the engineering specifications required for hot-mix asphalt. Aggregate sources that meet these specifications within this region are scarce.

The proposed 23-hectare quarry seeks to continue operations within the proposed quarry footprint to access additional rock resources. It is anticipated that this quarry is large enough to secure sufficient, high quality aggregate materials to sustain TI for the next 30 years in this

region. While quarry tenure would be issued to TI, TI will require its agents to obtain subordinate quarry permits issued to them by the Department of Energy and Mines (EM).

The existing quarry is located 3 kilometers north of the community of Blue Cove on Route 430 (see Figure 1). This project would be a source of quarry material to support provincial road construction and maintenance contracts awarded by TI. This project is required to be registered with Environmental Assessment as required under section 33(3) of the Environmental Assessment Regulations, 2003.

#### 4. Description of the Undertaking

##### 4.1 Geographical Location

The proposed quarry is located on the west side of the Northern Peninsula (Figure 1 and Figure 2). The 23-hectare proposed quarry is located approximately 3 km north of the community of Blue Cove on Route 430 (UTM NAD 84 Zone 21U 509670 m E 5662411 m N) (Figure 2). The site is located outside the boundary of any neighboring communities.

The existing site is accessed by taking the exit for Route 430 (the Viking Trail) from the Trans-Canada and travelling approximately 400 km north of the community of Deer Lake (Figure 1).

The project is adjacent to permitted quarry (71111407) issued to Mike Kelly & Sons Ltd (Figure 2).

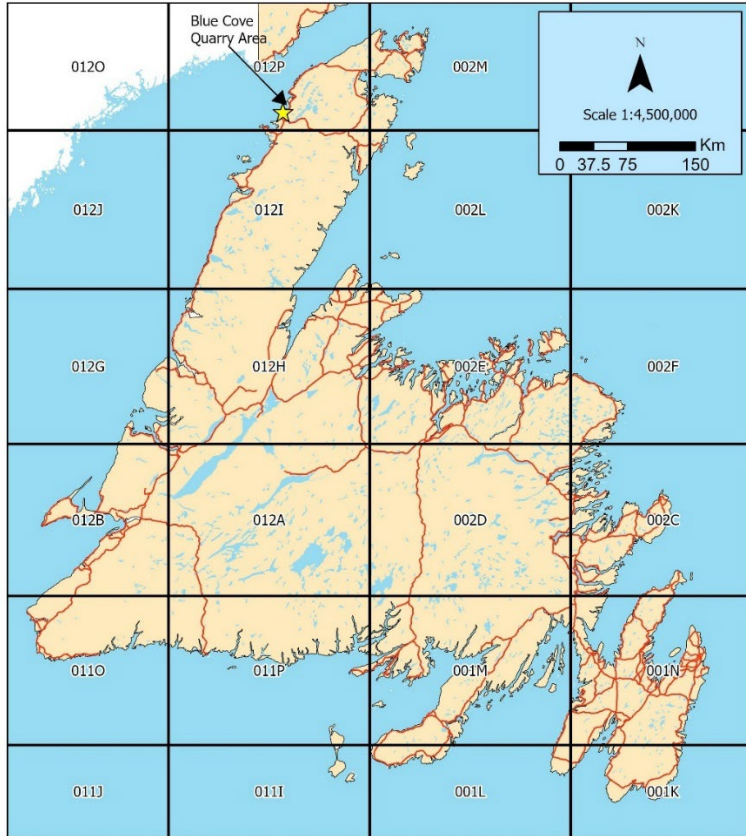


Figure 1: Location map of proposed project.

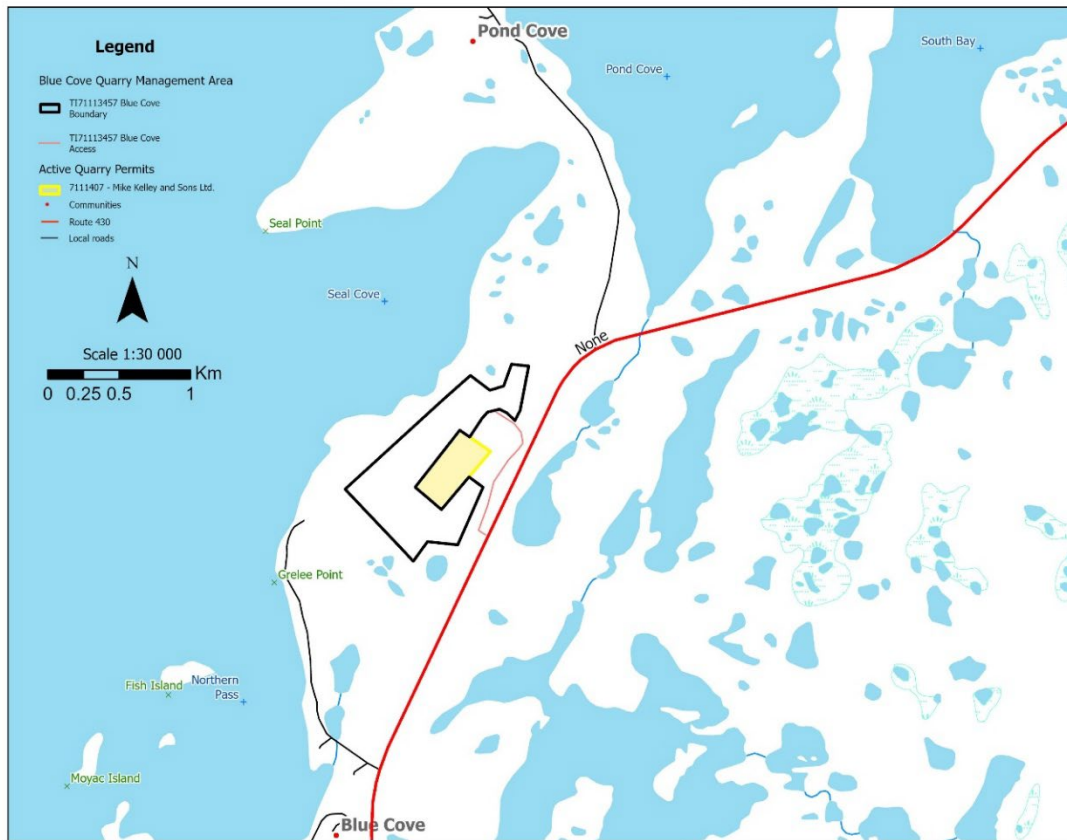


Figure 2: Blue Cove QMA as shown on NTS map sheet 12P/02.

## 4.2 Physical Features

Located on the west coast of the Great Northern Peninsula, Blue Cove QMA lies within the Strait of Belle Isle Barrens ecoregion. This region is characterized by flat, treeless, rocky limestone coastal barrens. The summer growing season is short, with temperatures typically remaining below 20°C, resulting in low-growing vegetation and the presence of many arctic-alpine plant species, including dwarf willow and velvet bells (<https://www.gov.nl.ca/eccc/files/natural-areas-pdf-island-9-strait-of-belle-isle-barrens.pdf>).

The limestone barrens create a unique soil environment with low acidity and high pH levels, conditions to which only certain plant species have adapted. These include yellow lady's slipper, purple saxifrage, mountain avens, Lapland rosebay, white orchid, and flame lousewort.

The area is also home to a variety of bird species commonly associated with Arctic regions. These include gyrfalcon, Lapland longspur, hoary redpoll, and ivory gull. Other bird species found in the area include white-rumped sandpiper, ruddy turnstone, common eider, and short-eared owl.

Mammals inhabiting the region include red fox, red squirrel, Canada lynx, little brown bat, snowshoe hare, black bear, and caribou (<https://www.gov.nl.ca/eccc/files/natural-areas-pdf-island-9-strait-of-belle-isle-barrens.pdf>).

Geologically, the Blue Cove QMA is located within the Watts Bight Formation of the St. George Group and is mapped as an early Ordovician dark grey to grey carbonate dolostone. The bedrock is overlain by varying amounts of glaciomarine and marine deposits composed of sand and gravel and diamicton.

Blue Cove QMA is located 650 m northwest of a protected Grand Pond Water Resources Management Area (Figure 3). As shown in Figure 4, appropriate environmental setbacks have been taken into consideration to establish the proposed boundary and access to the site.

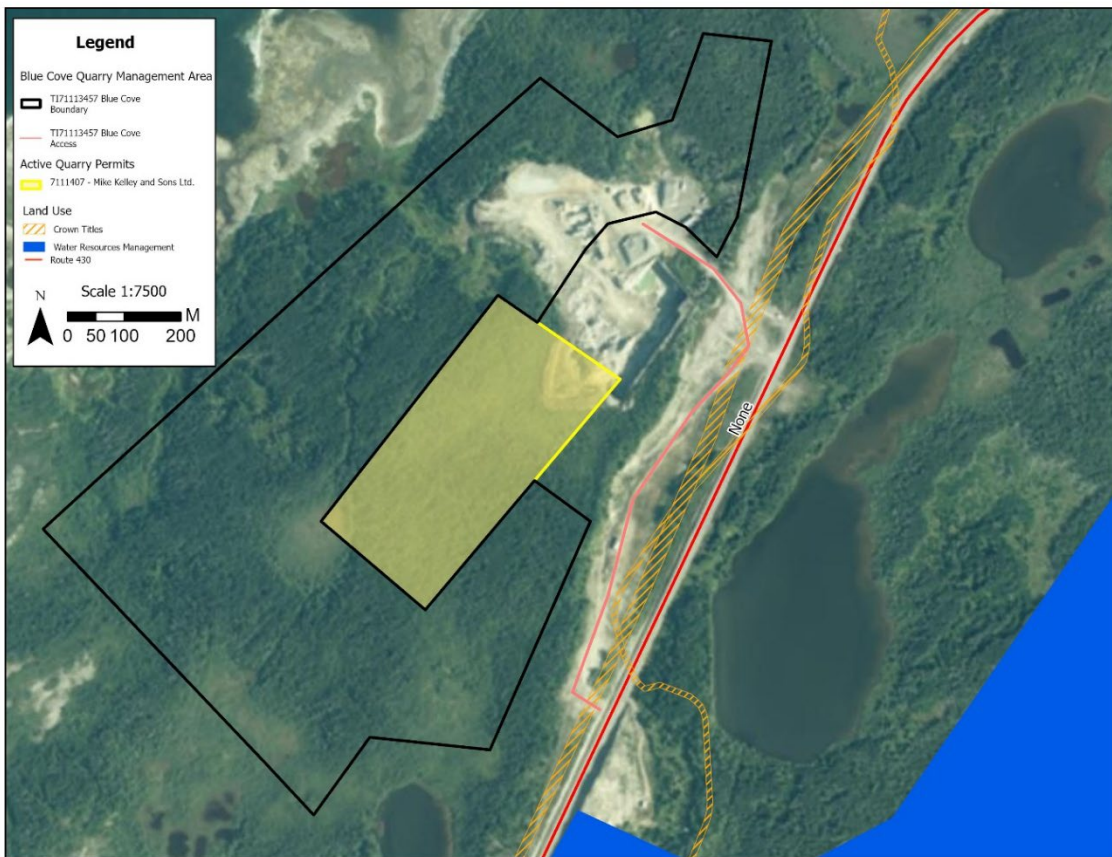


Figure 3: Map of the Blue Cove QMA and nearby land uses.

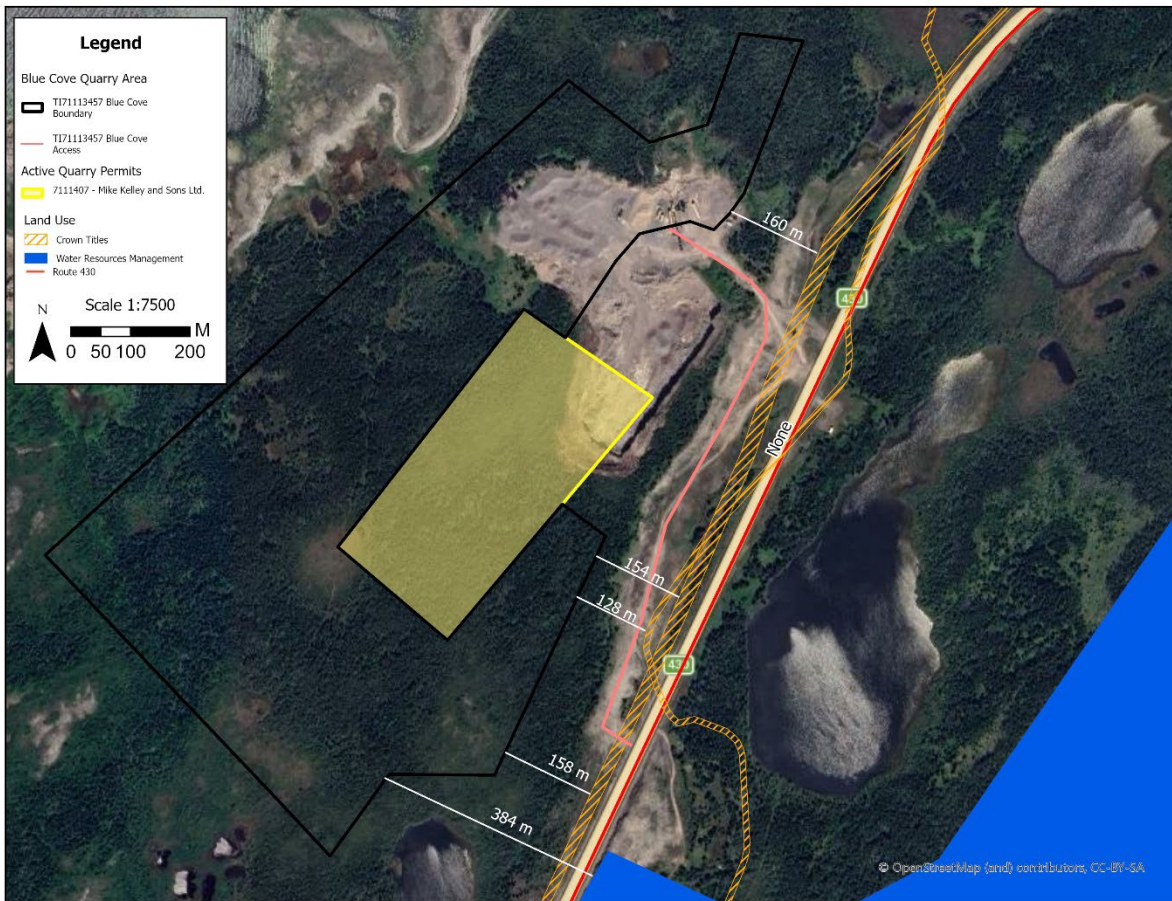


Figure 4: Location of site showing setback distances from Newfoundland and Labrador hydro line and from the Water Resource Management Area.

### 4.3 Construction

The quarry will be accessed from an upgraded access road off Route 430. The quarry was developed in the past maintaining the natural vegetation screen between the quarry and Route 430 which screens operations from view of the public and other land uses in the area (e.g., Hydro line and the snowmobile trail). Operations will be monitored as the development continues, and if the site becomes visible, vegetated berms will be installed as required.

As outlined in table 1, prior to development, additional permits and approvals from government agencies will be required. Onus will be on TI or its agents to apply for and obtain all additional permits and approvals. Copies of all permits and approvals are required to be submitted to EM for review before the issuance of a quarry permit to TI and be in place prior to the issuance of a subordinate quarry permit to an agent of TI. Development of the project area will not commence until all permits and approvals are obtained. A quarry lease will be pursued prior to the expiration of the quarry permit.

TI agents applying for subordinate quarry permits will be required to submit a detailed site plan to TI to coordinate approval of the permit by EM's Mineral Lands Division. Site plans will outline staged phases of excavation showing areas where operations will occur with a volume of material specified, location of stockpiles (quarry materials, overburden, and topsoil), and location of stationary equipment (i.e. asphalt plants etc.). Issuance of quarry tenure to meet contract deadlines will not be approved without an approved site plan. Planned operations will be further developed through the creation of quarry lease plans.

#### 4.4 Operation

While the rights to the quarry will be held by TI, development and operations at the site are anticipated to occur by contractors with awarded government contracts. Requests to access the quarry will be reviewed and managed by TI Geologists with the Mineral Lands Division, and all operations will be inspected routinely to ensure compliance with the Quarry Materials Act and Regulations.

Operations will continue to occur within the existing permitted area and expand to the south and southwest gradually over time. The existing site will be retained under permit, and the area once depleted of quarry resource will be used for processing and laydown (e.g., screening and stockpiling of material). Areas not required for laydown will be progressively rehabilitated.

Most of the quarry area has been cleared of overburden from historical operations at the site, but there are local areas that have not previously been excavated. In these areas, operations will include the clearing of overburden material to expose the underlying surficial materials. Topsoil and grubbing will be cleared and stockpiled for progressive and final rehabilitation of the quarry.

The processing of materials extracted from the quarry will include pit run-removal, screening, and stockpiling quarry materials using various types of equipment such as excavators, and front-end loaders. Other associated equipment may include portable asphalt plants if authorized by the Department of Government Services. Various sizes of dump trucks will be used for transportation to the project location.

Activity at the site is anticipated to be periodic and within the construction season, which typically extends from April to November annually.

The life expectancy of the quarry is anticipated to be 30 years, but this estimate is dependent on the demand for quarry materials in the region and the volume of aggregate available from other sources. Operations will be conducted in a logical, staged sequence and in accordance with development plans reviewed and approved by TI Geologists. While the

annual production may vary from year to year, it's anticipated to be less than 100,000 cubic metres per year.

#### 4.4.1 Potential Sources of Pollutants

##### 4.4.1.1 Fuel

Any required fuel caches will be registered with the Department of Government Services. In the event of a spill, immediate action will be taken to ensure the spill is contained and does not enter any waterbodies (i.e. create a catchment ditch and berm). All spills and leaks will be cleaned up immediately and reported to Government Services for inspection and clearance. Any spills in excess of 70L will be reported to the Environmental Emergencies Line. Storage, handling and disposal of waste oil and fuels will be compliant with the *Used Oil and Used Glycol Control Regulations*.

##### 4.4.1.2 Air and Noise

Equipment will be equipped with emission and noise control devices. Equipment is to be properly maintained to minimize noise and exhaust, and where applicable, subject to certification by Government Services. Any equipment entering the Trans-Canada Highway / Route 1 will be equipped with effective dust-mitigation measures to ensure dust and debris is not tracked onto the highway.

##### 4.4.1.3 Garbage Disposal

All waste generated through quarry operations will be collected and disposed of on a regular basis. Access to the site will be restricted to prevent illegal dumping of refuse materials. Onus will be on TI or its agent to remove garbage and or refuse materials if illegal dumping occurs during issuance of quarry tenure.

##### 4.4.1.4 Runoff

There is potential for runoff as the quarry is developed and quarry materials are extracted. As required, sedimentation controls will include ditches to control water in the site, and silt fencing to ensure there is no sedimentation of nearby waterbodies. Prior to issuance of quarry tenure, operators will be required to submit a Site Plan that details surface water drainage to ensure proper measures are in place to ensure runoff from the site is mitigated.

#### 4.4.2 Potential Resource Conflicts

Given the nature of the project site, there is a possibility of the presence or an encounter with wildlife. Development and operations within the project site will operate as outlined in the Wildlife Act and the Migratory Birds Convention Act and Regulations.

During the development of the site, vegetation will not be cleared within:

i) 800 metres of a bald eagle or osprey nest between March 15 and July 31; 200 meters during the remainder of the year.

ii) 200 meters of other raptor nests between March 15 and July 31.

No ground disturbance or vegetation clearing is to occur within:

i) 800 meters of a short-eared owl nest between May 15 and August 15

Locations of raptors nests will be reported to the Wildlife Division.

Current buffer distances between the quarry and nearby waterbodies and wetlands exceed the minimum 30 m required to protect riparian and aquatic species and habitats.

The Blue Cove QMA boundary lies within 100 m of an issued crown licence belonging to the Newfoundland and Labrador Snowmobile Federation Inc and 150 m of a crown lease issued to Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro (Figure 4). TI geologists responsible for the quarry will ensure quarry boundaries are maintained so the buffer issued crown titles are maintained.

Access to the site will be restricted to prevent any unauthorized access to the site for recreation and hunting.

#### 4.4.3 Viewscape Concerns

Given the forest in the area and the setback distance from Blue Cove QMA visibility of operations at this site is not a concern. Operations at the site are proposed to be carried out in a development sequence that will allow the viewscape from Blue Cove QMA to continue to be managed.

#### 4.4.4 Access Road

The current access is on a turn and requires appropriate sight distances. The proposed access meets acceptable access distances, however, is within the protected road zone and will therefore need a protected road zone permit. Permitting will be managed by TI geologists while road maintenance will be managed by TI or its agents.

#### 4.5 Occupations

Although TI is the proponent for this project, TI will not be the sole operator of this site. The permit area would be used by contractors after award of contract to acquire material via a subordinate quarry permit (SQP). Typical occupations involved with the scope of this project include;

- Heavy Equipment Operators (73400)
- Heavy Equipment Mechanics (72401)
- Laborers (75110)
- Site Supervisor (72021)
- OH&S Inspector (22232)

Exact number of required staffing is unknown.

Quarry operations are largely dependent on the work or contracts obtained by the company/individual. As such, the exact schedule of operations would be dependent on the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure for timing of issuance of provincial contracts, which would vary year to year. During busy years, activity at the site may continue provided weather and ground conditions allow (e.g., April – November), while in slower periods, activity may be intermittent or dormant for an entire year or more.

Hiring will be largely dependent on the company or companies that obtain approval to work in the Department’s quarry site. Depending on the size of a company’s existing workforce and current/upcoming contracts, the project may be operated with the same staff, or new staff may need to be hired. This quarry expansion project would likely not result in the addition of staff, merely the movement of staff and equipment from one work area to another.

#### 5. Approval of Undertaking

Table 1 contains the list of permits, licenses and/or approvals that are required for this project:

Issuing Authority	Permit/Approval Required
Dept. Environment, Conservation and Climate Change – EA Division	Release from EA
Dept. Energy and Mines – Mineral Lands Division	Quarry Permit and Quarry Lease
Dept. Forestry, Agriculture and Lands	Operating and commercial forestry permit
Dept. Government Services	Protected Road Zone – Development Permit

Table 1: List of approvals required permits from provincial agencies.

## 6. Schedule

Scheduled start of project is dependent on TI's contract award scheduling. It is anticipated that the first phase of development would begin as early as Summer 2026 with continued phased development as required for future contracts that are tendered and awarded.

## 7. Capital Cost and Funding

Due to TI's tendering process, the cost of the development of this quarry is largely unknown as the cost is dependent on the type of construction project and operations to occur on site (e.g. pit run removal, screening, etc.) and the location of end product of the quarry materials (i.e. small scale road maintenance vs large scale awarded provincial contracts). Funding for the development and operation of the project would be borne by individual companies and sub-contractors through awarded TI contracts.