

NATIONAL STONE, SAND & GRAVEL ASSOCIATION



*Natural building blocks for quality of life*

April 21, 2006

Dear Member of Congress:

As we celebrate Earth Day 2006, the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (NSSGA), the largest mining association by product volume in the world, is proud to acknowledge the fine work our members do to improve the quality of life of all Americans while conserving and protecting the world around us. NSSGA's Environmental Guiding Principles state that aggregate producers will do better than the law or regulation requires, wherever possible. We recognize the Earth's resources upon which all life depends, are finite, and that wise environmental stewardship is necessary to preserve the potential for a quality of life for future generations.

Generally, the public is unaware of the many programs and projects our members undertake to benefit the environment. For example, in Nebraska our members are working with the Nature Conservancy and local officials to construct a workable plan to allow mining along the Platt River with a resulting landscape that is beneficial to wildlife and encourages sustainable land use. Additionally, working through the Wildlife Habitat Council, a number of our members are actively managing portions of their property for the benefit of native plants and animals. In New York, one of our members is reclaiming a quarry to increase the population of the endangered Karner Blue butterfly and to help restore the rare American chestnut tree. The lesson we can glean from these projects is cooperative conservation works. As Congress contemplates environmental legislation now and in the future, I encourage you to keep an open mind to cooperative conservation. It is clear working together we can do more to preserve the land for this generation and those to come.

As the nation progresses in the effort to reduce air pollution I would like to draw your attention to a little recognized way aggregates are used in pollution prevention. Our industry helps smoke stack industries clean their emissions through a process called flue gas desulpherisation. Simply stated, it is a process where emissions from burning fossil fuels are forced through a wet material, usually lime or crushed limestone, supplied by our industry to remove sulfur dioxide. The end result actually produces gypsum, which can be used in wallboard products. On the reverse side of this page you will find more examples of how aggregates are used to benefit the environment.

NSSGA's member companies produce 90 percent of the crushed stone and more than 70 percent of the sand and gravel consumed annually in the U.S. Aggregates are the largest component of asphalt and concrete. Nearly three billion metric tons of aggregates valued at over \$17.4 billion are estimated by the U.S Geological Survey to have been sold in the U.S. in 2005. Without these important natural products, the nation's infrastructure could not be built or maintained, and commerce and quality of life would be severely affected. With over 11,000 operations nationwide and a workforce of more than 117,000 men and women, most Congressional Districts are home to multiple aggregate operations.

The aggregates industry is truly shaping landscapes for tomorrow as it preserves land for future generations of Americans through conservation efforts like these. We take pride in the things the industry does and the products produced to maintain the quality of life Americans enjoy while protecting and preserving the land for future generations. If you would like more information, please give me a call or visit our website at [www.NSSGA.org](http://www.NSSGA.org).

Sincerely,

  
Jennifer Joy Wilson  
President and CEO

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## **Environmental Uses and Benefits of Stone, Sand & Gravel**

Aggregates are employed throughout the country wherever any type of building or public works construction activity takes place. The physical, chemical and mechanical properties of aggregates make them an ideal construction material for a wide variety of uses.

### **Erosion Control & Slope Protection**

- Dams
- Roadways and bridges
- Shorelines and navigation channels
- Rivers and stream banks
- Runoff control at construction sites
- Wetland and stream restoration

### **Filtration**

- Sewage treatment
- Wastewater control
- Septic tank leaching fields
- Infiltration for aquifer replenishment

### **Acid Neutralization**

- Streams
- Lakes
- Agricultural land

### **Reclamation of Mine Sites**

- Habitat creation and maintenance
- Backfill
- Land cover

### **Landfills & Waste Disposal**

- Leachate and gas collection layers
- Covers and protection
- Leachate pH adjustment

### **Concrete and Asphalt Construction for Public Works Infrastructure**

- Sewage treatment plants
- Water purification plants
- Incinerators and recycling facilities
- Dams, reservoirs and water supply
- Utility lines

### **Coal Mine Dusting to Prevent Explosions**

- Non-combustible limestone

### **Flue Gas Desulfurization**

- SO<sub>2</sub> reduction using limestone