

NEW ENGLAND GRASSROOTS
ENVIRONMENT FUND
Small Grants Program Application

Please email the application to your program officer or mail a hard copy to:
P.O. Box 1057 / Montpelier, VT 05601

We copy all applications for our grantmaking committee members. Please print the application single-sided, please don't staple materials together, and please don't use any folders or binders.

DATE: 1/2/08

CONTACT PERSON: Louise Cahill

(please list one person who will be available to answer questions)

NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION: Citizens for Health Safety and Ecology

ADDRESS: 2 Bryant St., Unit E, Assonet, MA

02702

PRIMARY PHONE #: 508-644-2196

ALTERNATIVE PHONE #: 508-542-9158

EMAIL: cahi04@verizon.net

FAX #: none

WEBSITE: not up yet

AMOUNT OF THIS REQUEST: \$2,480.00

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET: \$3,080.00

TOTAL CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET: \$600.00

TOTAL AMOUNT YOUR ORGANIZATION SPENT LAST YEAR: Not applicable – newly formed

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, FULL AND/OR PART-TIME: None

PROJECT PROPOSAL SUMMARY (No more than 3 sentences – please start with, "To..."):

To stop a quarry operation in a residential neighborhood that threatens the public health and safety of residents. To protect historic landmarks, historic graveyards and local dams that may be damaged by blasting from the quarry operation. To protect the groundwater that supplies the only source of clean drinking water through private wells, the ecology of the Assonet River and nearby conservation lands all threatened by the quarry operation.

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT NEGEF? Through the Toxic Action Center and No Quarry Organization

CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THAT BEST APPLIES TO YOUR ORGANIZATION:

Ad Hoc group

Ad Hoc group with fiscal agent (name of agent): _____

Incorporated as a nonprofit in your state

501(c)(3) status with the IRS

If you are an ad hoc group and do not have a checking account or fiscal agent, you will need to set up an account or agent upon receipt of a grant. You do NOT need to have an account or agent when you apply.

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PROJECT NARRATIVE & BUDGET *(no more than 2 pages please)*

1. Give a brief description of your proposed project. Be sure to include background of the issue.

Background – Cape Cod Aggregates purchased 24 acres of land at 5 Rear Bryant Street in Freetown with an adjoining 45 acres on Bryant Street in Berkley. Bryant St. is intersected by the town line between Freetown and Berkley, the entire quarry operation will be located on one street, but will be located in both towns because of the town line. Both sides of Bryant Street are lined with well-established family homes and the surrounding area around the quarry site in Freetown is composed of family neighborhoods. The property was originally used for skeet shooting and then converted into Freetown Sand and Gravel. The sand and gravel operation was limited to the Freetown portion of the property only. Freetown Sand and Gravel was a surface operation that did not create a large crater or use explosives. Freetown Sand and Gravel went out of business 8 years ago and let all of its licenses lapse. Before selling the property to Cape Cod Aggregates, the original owner of the property applied for a permit from the Freetown Soil Board (composed of the members of the Freetown Board of Selectmen) as Freetown Sand and Gravel. Once the permit was issued, the property was sold to Cape Cod Aggregates.

In the spring of 2008 Cape Cod Aggregates applied for a permit in Berkley and withdrew their application due to public pressure. However, the company has always stated that they plan to re-apply in Berkley and that they are working on a new proposal.

After being temporarily defeated in Berkley, the company began developing the Freetown side of the property and is currently ready to begin test blasting in Freetown. Test blasting is used to determine the type of stone that is present and to see how the stone will shatter when blasted. This matter is extremely time sensitive as the quarry plans to start test blasting sometime after January 9th or 11th. Production blasting is scheduled to begin this spring. There are currently no regulations in Freetown on how often the company can blast or what days or time of day blasting can and can not take place. The Fire Marshall will be present at the first test blast only. The Town does not plan to conduct any seismic monitoring to make certain that the explosions remain within limits specified by the state. This leaves the company to monitor itself. Freetown Selectmen have not shown any inclination towards conducting an Environmental Impact Study, traffic study, hydrology study, pump test or prevailing winds study to determine the true impact of this project on the health of residents, public safety, affect on the only source of drinking water through groundwater from private wells or environmental toll of this project. Residents have requested that independent experts be hired by Freetown to review the company's plans. The Town has failed to respond to this request. The company has stated that they plan to mine the property for the next 30 years.

We are concerned about the health of the Assonet River, including the plant, wildlife and aquatic life being negatively impacted by this operation. We are concerned about habitat areas and conservation lands nearby being negatively impacted. We are concerned that blasting may cause private wells to go dry or contaminate the ground water that supplies private wells. We are afraid that pumping the aquifer out of the quarry may cause private wells to go dry, and dry up wetlands. Blasting has the potential to cause a significant amount of damage to homes. Flyrock from blasting can cause serious injury as well as property damage. Blasting can release radon into water and basements of nearby buildings. Radon is known to cause lung cancer. Sulfides from quarries cause asthma. Constant loud noise is known to cause stress related illness and impact the cognitive development of children. Silica dust from quarries causes lung cancer, silicosis, skin disease, kidney failure, and immune system diseases. Large quarry trucks will share narrow roads that have no shoulder, streetlights or sidewalks with pedestrians, cyclists, school busses, emergency vehicles and family passenger cars. Towns with quarries experience an increase in accidents between trucks and family passenger cars.

Proposed Project

Our ultimate goal is to stop the quarry from being installed at this location in order to protect the public safety, property and health of residents as well as to protect the Assonet River, surrounding conservation lands and habitats, aquifer and land important to supporting the Taunton River Watershed. At the very least, if the operation is not able to be stopped, Citizens for Health, Safety and Ecology would like to make certain that every effort is made by the Town of Freetown and Cape Cod Aggregates to minimize as much as possible the impact of the operation on both the local ecology and residents.

Citizens for Health, Safety and Ecology is launching a public awareness/education campaign in Freetown on this issue. Our goals are: to create citizen involvement on this issue in Freetown and to give citizens of Freetown and abutters in Berkley the opportunity to have a public voice and vote on this issue. We endeavor to use public involvement to accomplish the following:

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to ensure that the Town of Freetown and Town of Berkley work cooperatively to ensure the health and safety of the residents of both towns and their property and consider the environmental impact of the entire project as it affects both towns as the portion of the project in Freetown may affect the abutters and ecology of Berkley and vice versa; to hold the Town of Freetown and Cape Cod Aggregates publicly accountable for decisions and actions regarding this project that affect public health, public safety and local ecology; to require Cape Cod Aggregates release to the public complete and specific information regarding the scope of their plans for the entire project; to require the Town of Freetown to assume a more responsible role in the protection of its citizenry by completing a more thorough review of the project using independent experts at the applicant's expense to review the applicants plans in their entirety and to conduct an Environmental Impact Study, complete hydrology study, pump test and traffic study; to delay blasting and any related harm blasting may cause to public safety, property and the environment until the proper studies are completed to have a MEPA review of the project in its entirety. If the Town of Freetown allows test blasting and/or production blasting to take place, Citizens for Health Safety and Ecology would like to hire an independent expert to provide seismic monitoring to ensure the enforceable responsibility of the quarry operation to remain within legal blasting limits at each blast, protect the safety of residents and limit the extent of potential property damage to homes.

Timeline In order to achieve these goals, Citizens for Health, Safety and Ecology will need to hold its own "people's town meetings" to inform the public on this issue; create flyers, brochures, buttons, yard signs; create a web page; send out bulk mailings to residents, and establish a PO Box address. Additionally, it may become necessary to pay for seismic monitoring, hire experts, and pay legal fees.

2. If your project is successful, what changes will occur in your community and its environment? Please include a timeline/steps for its completion.

If the quarry operation is stopped, resident wells will not go dry or become contaminated from the mining operation. The drinking water supply will not be threatened. Homes will not be damaged by blasting. Homes will not loose value due to proximity to a quarry. The safety of residents and property will not be threatened by flyrock incidents. Residents will not face health risks from sulfides, diesel exhaust, radon or silica dust. The quality of life of residents will be improved through the removal of a significant source of constant loud noise and dust. Traffic safety will be improved through the absence of large quarry trucks on narrow local roads. Environmental damage will be avoided and the environmental resources protected if 20,000,000 million cubic yards of earth are not removed from the site. The Assonet River will not become contaminated with silt or discharge water that would threaten the wildlife, plant and aquatic life along the river. The structural integrity of small dams on the Assonet River would not be compromised by blasting and potential flooding could be avoided. A historic bridge on Rt. 79 (Richmond Road) would be saved from potential damage due to blasting.

In addition to the hazards that would be avoided, two historic graveyards located on the site could be made available to the public for family and historical research and be properly preserved in a peaceful setting. If the land can ultimately be purchased or donated and used for open space and habitat restoration, this type of land use would increase property values, improve the local ecology, exist in harmony with conservation lands surrounding the site, offer a more attractive land use to residents and preserve the rural character of both Freetown and Berkley.

Even if the quarry project is not able to be entirely halted, the actions of CHSE would ensure greater responsibility by local town officials to the concerns and needs of the citizenry; greater care and scrutiny in the planning and execution of the project; lessening of the impact on residents, abutters and the ecology; accountability and safety achieved through independent monitoring; and significant improvements in public health and safety then are currently being proposed.

Achieving the goals of the public awareness campaign will also increase the involvement of Freetown citizens in their local government, create more accountability by Town Government to the local citizenry, create more corporate responsibility regarding land use, ecology and public safety.

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3. Project Budget

- **Itemize anticipated expenses and income for this Project Proposal. Also note in-kind services (donated materials and/or labor) you may receive for this proposal.**
- **Please specify what expenses will be covered with NEGEF's funds (underline, bold, italicize, or * those items).**

EXPENSES

	INCOME	IN-KIND SERVICES
<u>200 yard signs with wire stands and shipping</u> \$500.00	\$421.00 from fundraising event	Graphic Design Services \$500.00
<u>Copying of Brochures and Flyers</u> \$200.00	and individual donations generated	Web Design Services \$400.00
<u>Bulk Mailing Permit</u> \$180.00	by event.	Expert Speakers \$450.00
300 Buttons + proof and shipping \$150.00	\$100.00 in additional donations	
	\$79.00 Borders Books Fundraiser	
PO Box \$40.00		
<u>Seismic Monitoring \$100.00 month (2 locations)</u>		
12 months = \$1,200.00		
Non-Profit Organization filing fees \$50.00		
Fees for filing an injunction or other legal fees \$360.00		
<u>Environmental Scientist \$400.00</u> (initial fee at reduced rate of @\$50.00 hr)		
(Total expenses) = \$3,080.00	(total income) = \$600.00 +	(total in-kind services)= \$1,350.00

- **Principal sources of support (E.g. Membership dues, individual donations, grants, special events, etc.) Please list any grants that your group has received.**

Individual donations/Special Events – The group has raised \$600.00 since its formation in November. This money has come from a fundraising event with Borders Books, a fundraising concert and individual donations. Volunteers are providing skills and services. We have located a volunteer to create a web page, that is not completed yet and expert speakers willing to make presentations on our behalf at public town meetings, as well as at our own informational meetings for the public.

Please include the following attachments with your application form:

- **A list of key volunteers, board of directors and current staff with affiliations, brief biosketches, and email addresses**
- **Financial statement for most recent completed year and budget for current year, if available**
- **List of local media with contact names and emails to whom we can send a press release**
- **Selected copies of group's newsletter, brochure, and/or press clippings, if appropriate**

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APPLICANT PROFILE

1. What is the mission or the goals of your group?

Mission: To campaign against specific threats to the public health and public safety of citizens, protect residents from unreasonable long-term impositions on quality of life, protect the vital natural resources, local ecology, historic landmarks and rural character of Assonet and surrounding areas through citizen involvement.

Current Goals:

To stop the quarry as an unsuitable industrial use in a residential neighborhood.
To prevent the negative impact on residents and the environment a quarry at this location would pose.
To mitigate the impact of the quarry on residents and the environment if the operation can not be stopped entirely.
To educate and mobilize the public around this issue.
To create better responsiveness by local Town officials to the needs and concerns of the citizenry
To create a greater degree of protection to the public and environment

Future Goals:

With the successful resolution of the quarry issue, CHSE will advocate for suitable uses for the site

2. How long has your group been in existence? Since November, 2008

3. What issue/issues got your group going? Cape Cod Aggregates Quarry at 5 Bryant St. Rear in Freetown and notice of blasting to begin this January.

4. How many people started the group? 4

5. Is this the first time that the group's "founders" had been "activated"? This is the first issue that has activated the groups, founders, but founders have participated in this issue with No Quarry Organization in Berkley, MA.

If not the first time, with what other issues had they been involved?

The Cahill's participated with No Quarry Organization in Berkley. Because the property owned by the quarry site crosses town line with a portion of the property being in Freetown and a portion being in Berkley, two different town governments are involved. However the entire quarry will exist on one street (Bryant Street) in one neighborhood that is intersected by the town line. Because town governments are concerned with their own residents and the current activity has shifted to Freetown, Freetown residents felt it necessary to form their own citizens' action group with both CHSE and No Quarry Organization working collaboratively together. Citizens in Freetown have no standing in Berkley town government meetings. Berkley residents have no standing in Freetown town government meetings. Selectmen for both towns are only interested in the number of people living in their town who are opposed to the quarry, and discount the attendance, actions and input of residents from the other town. As the blasting will be taking place in Freetown, the current quarry operation is proceeding in Freetown, the current opposition needs to be expressed to the Freetown town government interested in the opinions of Freetown residents only, and it is currently Freetown citizens who need to be activated, it is thought best to have a Freetown organization working on this issue in cooperation with the Berkley opposition.

6. How many people are currently involved as the core group of leaders/workers? 6

7. Is this a membership organization? If so, how many members do you have? 70 participants so far and growing.

8. Do you have any paid staff? No

If yes, how many full-time equivalents?

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9. Approximately how many people in your community can be “activated” to support your issue – i.e., go to a meeting, sign a petition, call a selectperson, etc.? 200.

10. Has the focus of your group broadened or changed at all since it first started?

If so, in what ways? The group is newly formed. If the goal of stopping the quarry is achieved, we will look into alternative, appropriate, environmentally sound uses for the site in the future.

11. Have any members of your group run for or been appointed to public office since they started working on your issue/issues? No

If so, for what office?

Elected or appointed?

12. Describe the size and make-up of your community. Assonet is one of two villages in the town of Freetown. An original part of the town, Assonet was settled in 1659. It rests on the banks of the Assonet River. As of the 2000 census, the village had a total population of 4,084. Most of the homes in Assonet are mortgaged. Most of the Town is residential in nature. The neighborhoods affected by the quarry contain a number of elderly citizens as well as residents who speak Spanish and Portuguese as their first language. According to information from the 2005-2007 American Community Survey a significant number of the population speak a language other than English at home. There is a sizable portion of the population under 18 and over 65. Most residents have a high school diploma but only 23.5% have a college degree. One group home on Colonial Drive is close enough to be impacted by the quarry.

13. Have you networked or shared information/resources with other groups? Yes

If so, with whom and how did you find out about them? Toxic Action Center, No Quarry in Berkley, Concerned Citizens of Freetown. We learned of No Quarry through their local activities in Berkley and on Bryant Street to stop the quarry in their town. We learned of Toxic Action Center through their involvement with No Quarry Organization. We learned of Concerned Citizens of Freetown through Toxic Action Center. We located and contacted The American Lung Association, Green Futures and Boston University School of Public Health who have all written letters to Freetown Selectmen and Freetown Board of Health in support of our cause. We have networked with activists in Windam NH concerning issues pertaining to blasting; Ed Drecker of New Ipswich New Hampshire who fought of a sand and gravel pit in his neighborhood and activist Donna Brownell referred to us through Toxic Action. Paula Dugan also attended NEGREF's Columbus Day conference through her involvement with No Quarry Organization and has kept in touch with various activists she networked with at the conference.

14. How have you gained knowledge about your issue? By interviewing residents who live near a quarry operation in Achushnet MA and residents who live near a Cape Cod Aggregates operation in Bourne, MA. By speaking with and receiving research and public meeting presentation materials from other activists in other communities who have fought off sand and gravel/quarry operations in their communities. From networking with Pricilla Chapman of the MA Audubon Society, officers of the Taunton River Watershed Association and from receiving information from Toxic Action Center. From gathering information from professional hydrologists and other recognized experts. By taking workshops offered by the Taunton River Watershed Alliance on conservation laws, wetland protection endangered species and other relevant issues. By conducting Internet and print source research on Cape Cod Aggregates and their other company names. By conducting research at the library. A member of the group is a professional Librarian/Informational Specialist and conducts research for the organization as a volunteer.

15. If your organization is more than a year old, can you quantify any of your “successes”? Examples might be number of acres preserved, miles of trails, increase in recycling rates in town, toxic sites cleaned up, greenspaces/community gardens created, amount of money raised, legislation passed, etc. Our organization is less than 1 year old.

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- 16. What are the biggest challenges your community faces?** Balancing the needs of Town budgets and the local economy in harsh economic times and State budget cuts to communities against quality of life, health, safety and environmental issues. CHSE believes that this issue can be overcome by creating more protection for the public and environment through such tools as thoughtful town planning and zoning and actively attracting businesses that are compatible with the character and needs of the community.
- 17. What skills do you feel you and/or members of your group could use to help move your issue forward?** Volunteer recruitment, public campaigning, and fundraising.

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