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Ontario's opportunity to act on excess construction soils

TORONTO – Excavations across Southern Ontario have resulted in 20 to 25 million cubic metres of excess soils each year: that's enough to fill Rogers Centre in Toronto more than 15 times.

“There is a growing recognition by municipalities, the public and the construction sector that the current approach to managing excess soils from the building of rapid transit lines, roads, sewers and water mains is not as effective as it should be,” says Andy Manahan, and infrastructure advocate and Executive Director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO).

Construction companies and contractors have few options for disposing of excess soils, which means that it has to be hauled long distances to designated landfills in rural Ontario. Across the province, this creates an additional tax burden of up to \$1.7 billion every year.

There is a better way. We need to start thinking of “clean” excess soils from construction projects as a resource that can be reused beneficially. With better testing and tracking methods and a better understanding of how contaminants in the soil affect the natural environment, much of the excess soils can be safely reused in a variety of projects.

The construction industry has taken the lead by creating SOiil, an online soil-matching and tracking service based on tried-and-tested methods used in the United Kingdom. RCCAO wants to help change the way the public views excess soils and to see the benefits of repurposing them. Participating at the OGRA-ROMA Conference at the Fairmont Royal York hotel in Toronto on **Tuesday, Feb. 24**, RCCAO will host its own “Soils Room” to help educate conference participants on the many uses of excess soils. For more on the conference hosted by the Ontario Good Roads Association and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, visit www.combinedconference.org.

For more information about RCCAO's efforts, visit www.SOiil.com and www.rccao.com.

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