



## **Report: company has spent \$54.8 million on G'port cement proposal**

- ▶ **Figure appears in recent report by JPMorgan on Holcim, the parent company of St. Lawrence Cement**
- ▶ **Company seeks to reduce its financial 'burn rate' on project**
- ▶ **Retrospective of the first five years of Friends of Hudson opens May 15<sup>TH</sup> at Time & Space Limited**

HUDSON, N.Y.

With Friends of Hudson on the eve of a retrospective exhibition of its first five years, a new investment report from JPMorgan reveals that Holcim has already spent \$54.8 million in its attempts to obtain permits for the coal-fired cement facility proposed in Columbia County by its subsidiary, St. Lawrence Cement.

Despite that stunning expenditure, the company has still failed to obtain any of the 17 permits and approvals it seeks from 12 different local, County, State and Federal agencies.

The April 27, 2004 report from JPMorgan European Equity Research, ironically titled "Holcim: Leading cost cutter among the major cement companies," states that in addition to opening "new plants in Colorado and South Carolina,"

*Holcim is also currently applying for the necessary permits for its proposed new plants at Lee Island, Missouri and Greenport, New York. Holcim has already capitalised costs of \$54.8m on the latter plant where special interest groups have delayed progress and remain opposed to the new plant.*

### **OPPONENTS CALL FOR AN END TO GREENPORT PROPOSAL**

"This news confirms what we have suspected for a long time: namely, that SLC and its Swiss parent have outspent all their 35 opponents combined by a factor of at least 20 to 1," said Sam Pratt, Friends' executive director. Pratt noted that "Despite spending nearly \$55 million on heavy-handed public relations and belligerent applications, this cement company has failed to convince a single permitting agency of the merits of its case."

"It's time for an end to this wasteful spending by Holcim and SLC on lobbyists, lawyers, public relations, saturation advertising and experts-for-hire," said Peter Jung, president of the Friends board, adding that "This company's spending on such an inappropriate proposal has diverted our

community's time, energy and resources away from clean, sustainable projects and charitable works. Our organization is already exploring a post-SLC future." Jung also observed that "the \$55 million figure puts into stark perspective the company's paltry offers to Hudson and Greenport as part of a proposed 'host agreement' package."

#### **SLC EXECUTIVES SEEK TO CUT 'BURN RATE' OF PROJECT**

In a conference call this Winter with investors about 4th Quarter results for 2003, SLC president Philippe Arto and VP/CFO Dean Bergame were grilled by financial analysts and brokers about the progress of the company Hudson Valley applications. Questions about the Greenport timetable from Steve Lachak, an analyst with National Bank Financial, elicited these responses:

*ARTO: In terms of the Greenport project, it is obviously a very tricky question. We had absolutely no decision made neither on the second interim decision we were expecting from the DEC nor on the potential on grandfathering of our quarry there. And we have still [been] asked to supply complimentary information and to take part to different meetings. We have been through hearings at the end of the year on traffic, noise and so on. And this — it is a very long process and nobody is able to predict when it will end up with some sort of a decision. So, we — in our plans we each — almost to postpone our plans for one more year because we haven't — we have not produced any progress and it's hard to say at exactly what time we would be able to get the permit and start construction. But according to the schedule we had a year from now, a year-ago, in any case, construction would not start before say 2007.*

*BERGMAME: [...] The way it goes, it could take another year to make a decision so it's a really long process. What we've done is that we reduced what we call the burning rates, the burn rates. We have reduced our expenses on the project to be able to keep going longer.*

#### **FRIENDS OF HUDSON RETROSPECTIVE TO OPEN AT TSL**

Meanwhile, a retrospective of artifacts from the first five years of Friends of Hudson's history will open on Saturday, May 15th from 4-7 pm at Time & Space Limited in Hudson. The exhibition will begin with some prehistory of the organization; cover its founding during a separate proposal to site a hazardous waste processing plant on the Hudson waterfront; and delve into the organization's exponential growth from 30 to nearly 4,000 members during the SLC controversy. Exhibits will include familiar objects such as signs and flyers, videos of key events, and more unusual specimens—for example, one of the bottles of vinegar which SLC jokingly distributed at a 1999 meeting of the Greenport Planning Board. The opening is free to the public.

#### **UNITED OPPOSITION FROM CITIZENS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS**

Three distinct but united groups have each received full party status in New York State's review of SLC's permit applications for the proposed industrial and mining complex in Columbia County: Friends of Hudson; the separate Hudson Valley Preservation Coalition (HVPC, led by Scenic Hudson); and The Olana Partnership. These leading environmental groups of the Hudson Valley and numerous organizations from nearby Connecticut and Massachusetts are working together to defeat this proposed project. In addition, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Preservation League of New York State each have "amicus" status in these administrative proceedings.

*For more info on this release, including source documents, call (518) 822-0334 or email sampratt@mac.com*