

Quarries to pay for site monitor visits

A one-sided process will see local councils voting to award themselves more money at the expense of quarries, claimed the British

Aggregates Association (BAA) last week, BAA secretary Peter Huxtable told *CJ* a government review on monitoring quarries will see aggregates producers paying for site visits.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) consulted 24 local authorities, eight industry associations and five aggregates and stone firms for the review.

Huxtable said most representatives are involved in monitoring and planning, and he expects the outcome to be that quarries pay for monitors' visits.

He said: "All the ODPM has done throughout the process is listen, consult and then ignore."

Huxtable said he expects

quarries to pay £240 a visit, plus travel expenses. He said small producers will be hit hardest: "It's going to be £1,000 a year. It's the same a year for a small firm with a sand and gravel pit or a huge company such as Tarmac. It's all just more money that will be bled from industry."

Aggregates firms and associations vigorously opposed the introduction of monitoring fees. The ODPM claimed most representatives considered the proposed fees to be a "stealth tax". They also thought substantial increases in planning application fees should pay for monitors. Industry representatives described

the proposed regime as "inequitable and discriminatory".

Huxtable said: "We've already had the aggregates tax - we feel we've been hit twice."

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