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County residents take protest to Queen's Park; Site 41; [Barrie Edition]

Kim Goggins. *Barrie - Advance*. Barrie, Ont.: Aug 23, 2006. pg. A.3

Abstract (Summary)

To the crowd, [Peter Tabuns] said, "I came out here today because I know you're not just standing up for your community. I know you're not just standing up for water in your area but you are standing up for the environment across the province ... Up there in the committee hearing, we are looking at the Clean Water Act, Bill 43, and to tell you the truth, any premier of this province who really cares about water quality would stop this dump today."

He was one of about six people who spoke at the rally, including Dr. William Shotyk, a professor and director at the Institute of Environmental Geochemistry in Heidelberg, Germany. Shotyk's recent testing of the groundwater from Site 41 has confirmed that it's some of the cleanest in the world and he talked about his findings at the rally.

"When I heard that the County of Simcoe had plans to build a dump site, I thought perhaps i could help out by characterizing the chemical composition of the water today, before they build a landfill. I was given data by the county. I collected water samples from adjacent properties and took those samples back to our lab in Germany," Shotyk explained to the crowd. "The data I had been given by the county for the lead said that on average that water has two parts per billion of lead but when we made our measurement, we were finding parts per trillion of lead - roughly a thousand times lower."

Full Text (971 words)

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As more than 200 Site 41 protesters rallied outside Queen's Park on Monday, there is no doubt the large signs, loud country music and zeal of the crowd made an impression, but was their message heard by the Liberal government?

"We are a small but mighty community ... We have to continue the group fight. We all have to stand up," hollered one of the organizers of the event, Steve Ogden, to loud cheers from the crowd. "I keep saying, if we stand up they can't ignore us and we're standing up."

If the Liberal government heard them, they gave no indication, as not one Liberal MPP came out to listen to the group - or made their presence known - despite the fact many were on site at the Clean Water Act hearings that were before the standing committee on social policy.

Conservative MPP for Simcoe-Grey Jim Wilson, along with Conservative MPP for Victoria-Haliburton-Brock Laurie Scott, left the hearings to briefly attend the two-hour rally.

"There should be a representative of the government here," said Wilson. "That's a shame (that Premier Dalton McGuinty and Minister of Environment Laurel Broten aren't here). I was a cabinet minister and whether you agree or disagree, a courtesy would be to come to Queen's Park to at least welcome them and hear what they have to say."

Both McGuinty and Broten were invited to the rally by Community Monitoring Committee (CMC) chairperson Ray Millar but neither were at Queen's Park on Monday.

Wilson told *The Advance* he believes the County of Simcoe is being irresponsible on the issue.

"If I were to be critical, they haven't looked at all options. We need to look at more than just putting our garbage in the ground, in this day and age. I believe the County of Simcoe has enough room in its current sites that if they continue to manage those sites properly, they won't need Site 41 for decades."

NDP Environment Critic Peter Tabuns also stepped out of the hearings to attend the rally.

"I think this is significant," said Tabuns, admitting the issue was brought to his attention by his staff who are outraged that the province would consider going forward with Site 41. "The water in this area is extraordinarily pure. It should be protected. They

shouldn't be putting a dump site in an area that's going to contaminate it. It says to me that the province isn't paying attention."

To the crowd, Tabuns said, "I came out here today because I know you're not just standing up for your community. I know you're not just standing up for water in your area but you are standing up for the environment across the province ... Up there in the committee hearing, we are looking at the Clean Water Act, Bill 43, and to tell you the truth, any premier of this province who really cares about water quality would stop this dump today."

But Millar refused to politicize the issue, noting that each party, while in power, has had the opportunity to take Site 41 off the list of suitable sites for a landfill.

"Everyone's had their turn on it. So, to politicize it for political advantage, I think, is irresponsible," he said. "I think that the minister is sincere in her assertion that she wants the province to be safe; she wants the environment to be protected; and it's incumbent on us to make sure she hears the right message when she gets her information."

Millar had requested to speak at the Clean Water Act hearing but was told he was 19 minutes too late to make his request. However, he was invited to make a written submission by Aug. 28.

He was one of about six people who spoke at the rally, including Dr. William Shotyk, a professor and director at the Institute of Environmental Geochemistry in Heidelberg, Germany. Shotyk's recent testing of the groundwater from Site 41 has confirmed that it's some of the cleanest in the world and he talked about his findings at the rally.

"When I heard that the County of Simcoe had plans to build a dump site, I thought perhaps i could help out by characterizing the chemical composition of the water today, before they build a landfill. I was given data by the county. I collected water samples from adjacent properties and took those samples back to our lab in Germany," Shotyk explained to the crowd. "The data I had been given by the county for the lead said that on average that water has two parts per billion of lead but when we made our measurement, we were finding parts per trillion of lead - roughly a thousand times lower."

In fact, Shotyk found that the average concentration of lead and about 30 other metals in the ground water near Site 41 was the same as the average concentration in the cleanest layers of ancient arctic ice.

Because this water is so pure, it makes sense to hold off on approval of Site 41 until the Clean Water Act is enacted, says Millar.

"It's premature to approve Site 41, considering the possibility the site may adversely affect ground water resources," he said to cheers from the crowd.

Despite the deadline to respond to the MOE's draft notice of approval for Site 41, this Friday, members of the CMC vow the issue will not stop there. In fact, they plan to make it an important issue during the upcoming municipal election, especially for candidates who are running for mayor and deputy mayor who may have a vote on county council.

[Illustration]

Kim Goggins Photos / More than 200 protesters gathered at Queen's Park in Toronto Monday to voice objections to Site 41 landfill site plans.; : The message was clear at Queen's Park.

Credit: Barrie Advance

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