

MEDIA RELEASE
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Site 41 finally finished
“The community has shown that they will protect the water”

Midhurst, Ontario - Simcoe County Council voted today to rezone Site 41 as agricultural land and to put covenants into place that will prevent any garbage being dumped, sorted or treated at the controversial site. A capacity audience cheered loudly as the votes were announced on a motion to ask the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) to revoke the Certificate of Approval and on the amendment put forward by Tiny Township Deputy Mayor George Lawrence that would change the zoning and put in place the covenants. Many of those present had been arrested last summer during a month-long blockade of construction of at the site.

The Lawrence amendment is particularly important because the McGuinty government introduced the “Ontario Open for Business” Act last week, which greatly reduces the ability of communities to influence developments that threaten their land and water.

“If the Open for Business Act passes the MOE will be able to approve projects like Site 41 without a Certificate of Approval, without even telling local communities that something is going to be built, and that approval will be irrevocable,” said Mark Calzavara, Council of Canadians Ontario/Quebec Regional Organizer.

“The Certificate of Approval will become meaningless under the Open for Business Act,” warns Calzavara. “It won’t be required, but the zoning change and the covenants will stand in the way of any dumpsites in the future. I think the new Act was created partly in response to the success of the fight to stop Site 41 and if it passes, we will see many, many more people stopping bad developments with their bodies because they will have no other option.”

“It’s a great day for the people of Simcoe County, for democracy and for the water,” said Council of Canadians National Chairperson Maude Barlow. “I have seen communities from Bolivia to India and beyond fight to protect their water and I will be telling them all about how the people worked together in Simcoe - the First Nations, the agricultural community, the cottagers and everyone else - and were able to end a 26 year battle.”

“They never gave up, they never accepted that it was a ‘done deal’,” said Barlow, “and now they can look their grandchildren in the eye and say ‘we did this for you, now you protect it for your grandkids’.”

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