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CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE

Climate change is burning hot news! Look for the yellow-shirted EH volunteer team at your door, circulating a climate pledge in Hamilton neighbourhoods that invites residents to take specific steps to reduce their personal greenhouse gas emissions.

Cutting greenhouse gases is a responsibility for both individuals and governments. Environment Hamilton is encouraging residents both to do their part and to ask their political representatives to do likewise.

Residents who accept the challenge are receiving an energy saving kit to help them achieve even more greenhouse gas reductions. We're getting very positive reception at the door, with the great majority of residents already taking steps to combat climate change.

The summer (and fall) work for this project includes free

screenings of the Oscar-winning film "An Inconvenient Truth". We purchased the rights to the film in February and have shown it 33 times this year, primarily to faith groups.

We follow each screening with a group discussion, and a call to action in the face of dire predictions about climate change. If you know of a group that would be interested, please let us know.

We'll also be offering workshops in the fall to community groups.

These will focus on greenhouse gas emissions reduction. Interested parties should contact us at (905) 549-0900 or by email

Don't forget to visit our carbon calculator on the Environment Hamilton website to examine over 60 different ways you can reduce your personal carbon emissions.

Our thanks to the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Ontario Trillium Foundation for their funding support for this important work.

email: climatechangechallenge@hotmail.com

blog: www.hamiltonclimatechallenge.blogspot.com

HEY HAMILTON! EAT LOCAL!

It just got a whole lot easier to eat locally grown food in Hamilton this summer. Hamilton Eat Local, an Environment Hamilton project, has issued the first annual Buy Local! Buy Fresh! Map. The map illustrates the exact locations of over 50 farms and farm markets in

and around the city of Hamilton that sell their fruits, vegetables, meats and other edibles directly to consumers.

"A lot of people express an interest in eating locally grown food purchased from real farmers, but it's not always easy to find" explained project manager Sarah Megens. "We've solved this problem by

developing a local food map that shows exactly where people can go in and around the city to buy direct from farmers."

"Eating locally grown food makes so much sense. Not only is it fresher, and therefore healthier and tastier, but it is also better for the environment and makes a solid investment in the local

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LOCAL FARMERS ARE NOW ON THE MAP

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rural economy that's badly needed."

A recent study conducted by Toronto's FoodShare estimated that the average piece of produce sold at a supermarket in Toronto travels 5364km from field to fork, whereas the goods from a similar food basket sold at the neighbouring farmers' market traveled on average 101km.¹

"You can see that simply by eating locally, we are taking a lot of pressure off the environment through reducing our greenhouse gas emissions associated to food. It's a very empowering way to make a difference," says Environment Hamilton's executive director Lynda Lukasik.

While Winona is known for peaches, Hamilton actually boasts a large variety of local fruits, vegetables and meat products sold straight from the farm during every season. "We're lucky because we can buy local food year-round in Hamilton and most other regions don't have the luxury of variety that we do."



Hamilton Eat Local is largely funded by the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, which helps organizations such as ours bridge the gap between food grown or raised by local farmers, and our dinner tables. The Foundation recently awarded a grant of \$180,000 for Environment Hamilton's Eat Local work over the next two years.

Hamilton's local agricultural sector offers plenty of opportunity for day trips into the countryside. By visiting farms and getting to know our local food producers, people can learn more about farming and food; something the farming community says is required. "I'm often surprised at how little people actually know about farming. Sometimes I think we're taken for granted," says Megens, born and raised on a farm herself. "I plan to help change that."

The map has been well received by the farming and urban communities, and forms the cornerstone of the project as work continues to build the marketplace for locally grown food in and around the city. The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation has contributed \$180,000 to support

the project's plan to produce newsletter, City-wide Eat Local Challenges, a blog, consumer education workshops and special events coordinated with other groups like the newly formed Slow Food Hamilton.

30,000 copies of the map are available throughout the city and countryside at the Centre Mall Farmers' Market, the Hamilton Farmers' Market, farm stands and markets, Tourism Hamilton kiosks, the Environment Hamilton office, the Winona Peach Fest, the three rural fall fairs, and various other special events and celebrations throughout the city.

¹ Stephen Bentley and Ravenna Barker, Fighting Global Warming at the Farmers' Market: The Role of Local Food Systems in Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions. A FoodShare Research in Action Report, April, 2005

THE TOP FIVE REASONS YOU SHOULD EAT LOCALLY GROWN FOOD

- 1) You can reduce the volume of climate change causing greenhouse gases generated by the long-distance transportation of food. You can eat and save the environment!
- 2) You can eat fresher foods that taste better and are better for you. Fully vine ripened fruits and vegetables have higher nutritional value and simply taste better.
- 3) You can support our rural communities. When we buy from local farmers, we are supporting local businesses and providing income for our families. Let's help preserve our rural heritage and local farmland and keep our food dollars where they belong – in our community!
- 4) You can have fun learning about how food is grown and raised. How much do you know about your food? Farmers on the Eat Local Map take pride in growing high quality food that's safe for you and your family. Got food questions? Why not talk to an expert!
- 5) You can discover new foods and flavours. There are dozens of different kinds of fruits, vegetables, and other tasty edibles growing in our region. A typical local farmer produces several varieties of each product, many that you can't buy in a regular marketplace.

project blog: www.hamiltoneatlocal.blogspot.com

email: smegens.eatlocal@gmail.com

directory: www.environmenthamilton.org/eatlocal

GET SERIOUS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE FIX PUBLIC TRANSIT IN HAMILTON

Better public transit is the best way for the city to fight global climate change AND local air pollution AND the transportation implications of peak oil. But the HSR has

been given the short end of the stick by city council for decades. Hamiltonians should demand change. Consider the following:

- Nearly 50 percent of individual greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation
- The HSR budget today is less than in 1994 even without taking inflation into account
- There were 286 HSR buses in 1988. Today there are only 205.
- HSR service hours have fallen 15% since 1994 while fares have gone up more than 30%
- The HSR had over 30 million riders a year in 1985. Last year it barely hit 21 million
- Annual per capita transit use in Hamilton is only one-third the level of Ottawa.
- Most of the provincial gas tax monies given to Hamilton and nearly all the federal gas tax monies are not being spent on improving the transit system – the stated purpose of these senior government transfers
- There are only two bus routes in Ancaster, two in Dundas, and two in Stoney Creek
- Transit tax rates in old Hamilton are nearly five times higher than in Ancaster and Dundas and three times higher than in Stoney Creek

The news isn't all bad. People who use the HSR consistently praise it and the great majority think improving it should be a city priority. A survey done earlier this year by Mayor Eisenberger's

office asked that specific question and 81% of those who took a position said yes.

Many of the 34 new buses purchased this year are low emission hybrids, but unfortunately they are all only replacements. The total number of buses on the road has remained the same.

Nearly 44 percent of those surveyed reported using the HSR in the past year, and ridership is continuing to slowly increase even with those service cuts and fare hikes, though not nearly as fast as the Canadian average primarily because a few cities are registering double-digit growth rates because they've made substantial new investments in transit.

The message from the plus side is the same as from the minus – **public transit can do much better if given half a chance by our city politicians.** Here's a few practical suggestions:



1. Reverse the budget cuts and rapidly expand the bus fleet. We need more buses, more often. The routes with the most frequent service – like Barton and King where there's a bus every 7.5 minutes – are the most used.

2. End the bizarre system of "area rating" transit taxes. A home valued at \$200,000 in the former city of Hamilton pays \$168 a year for the HSR. One in Ancaster of the same value pays only \$34 – one-fifth as much! In Dundas the rate is \$41, and in Stoney Creek it's \$52. Hamilton is the only municipality in Ontario to charge some urban homes higher transit taxes than others. If everyone paid the rate currently imposed on old Hamilton, the HSR budget would jump nearly \$8 million a year – enough to provide much better service to the suburbs and other improvements.

3. Start increasing transit taxes instead of reducing them every year. The rates cited above are all less than what was charged on a \$180,000 home in 2004. In fact, the effective tax rate for the HSR appears to have fallen every year since the mid-1990s.

4. Dedicate gas tax monies to improving the transit system. Up until now, most of the money has gone to avoid raising taxes to cover the normal inflationary cost increases for fuel and other HSR expenditures.

Call, write or email your councillor and the mayor. Tell them to get working seriously on public transit in Hamilton.

TORONTO AWARD SUPPORTS HAMILTON AIR

A \$5000 "Green Toronto Award" to Hamilton scientist Dr David Pengelly has been donated to Environment Hamilton and the Conserver Society to improve local air quality in Hamilton.

Dr Pengelly has carried out primary scientific research on the adverse effects of air pollution on public health in Hamilton for over 30 years, and was principal author of the *Human Health Risk Assessment for Priority Air Pollutants*, for the Hamilton-Wentworth Air Quality Initiative Human Health Working Group in 1997.

The 1997 study estimated 90

premature deaths annually in Hamilton associated with air pollution, and an update to the study in 2000 using new scientific information estimated 279 annual premature deaths in Hamilton. Virtually all of this adverse impact on public health is associated with fossil fuel combustion, and in Hamilton, a large and growing portion of this is associated with road traffic and transport.

Dr. Pengelly used similar methods to assess the air pollution burden of illness in Toronto in several studies over the last seven years on behalf of Toronto Public Health. The first "Smog Summit" in 2000 was

convened by the City of Toronto as a direct result of his work, and continues to this day. In addition, the City of Toronto has adopted many corporate measures to attack its air pollution problem.

In May, the City of Toronto honoured Dr. Pengelly with the "Green Toronto Award" in the Health Category, as "a scientist who has dedicated his life, both professionally and as a volunteer, to improving air quality, protecting human health and demystifying the science of climate change. Working with Toronto Public Health, he has helped to empower the public to demand measures to clean up the air we breathe."

BE PART OF EH

Environment Hamilton strives to create a strong, collective environmental voice. That means we don't just pursue our projects – we want to engage people along the way. One way we do this is through our volunteer opportunities, which let you get hands-on action in the environmental trenches.

The other way is through membership.

Environment Hamilton takes its role as a local advocacy group very seriously – so much so, that we are willing to forego the benefits of charitable status so that we can take a stance on political issues. Choosing to speak up like this means we cannot qualify for the funding that full charitable status would bring. So, members are our lifeblood.

We would like to count on your support to let us continue the work of Environment Hamilton, work that has taken Hamilton much closer to our vision of a healthy, clean city.



Membership Category
(circle one):

Regular
\$25/year

Student/Unwaged
\$15/year

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone#: _____ Email: _____

Mail membership forms to:

Environment Hamilton
1130 Barton Street East, Suite 207
Hamilton, ONT L8H 7P9

Please make cheques payable to Environment Hamilton

Be sure to visit our website at www.environmenthamilton.org

You can also reach us at contactus@environmenthamilton.org

Or by telephone at (905) 549-0900

VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF COUNTING DUNDAS TREES

Trees Count is back! This is Environment Hamilton's 6th tree inventory and this time we're assessing the health of public and private trees in Dundas, one of Ontario's oldest communities.

We utilize Neighbourwoods, a survey tool developed at the University of Toronto's Forestry Department, which has been successfully used to collect good

BURNING SLUDGE

The city plan to start burning its sewage sludge was challenged by EH executive director Lynda Lukasik in a letter to council on August 7. She corrected a staff report that wrongly suggested EH endorsed the proposed sludge incinerator and pointed out our representative in the limited consultation questioned why the municipality was not placing greater priority on excluding heavy metals and other contaminants from the sludge and what will happen to that contamination in an incinerating process.

Environment Hamilton was one of a dozen groups and individuals that challenged the inadequacy of an environmental assessment of the Liberty Energy proposed sludge incinerator and helped convince the provincial government that the facility should be evaluated as a waste management facility, not an energy facility.

We are not convinced that incineration is the best option for dealing with sludge and are very concerned about adding more air pollution to an already compromised airshed in Hamilton, especially in the north-east end of the city.

quality data on the health of urban trees by volunteers in communities across Canada.

Our teams receive training to collect over 30 pieces of visual information about each tree and as of early August we had inventoried over 800, including the Dundas Driving Park and some of the older neighbourhoods in Dundas.

The survey runs from June to August 2007, and permission will also be sought from homeowners to gather data on trees in private backyards. The information - which includes details such as the tree species, height and trunk circumference measurement - is submitted at the end of the summer to the University of Toronto's Forestry Department, where a report is generated to assess the overall health of the community's urban forest.

Dundas has many mature trees gracing its landscape, and the Dundas Trees Count is alerting the community and city forestry department to older trees that require maintenance.

We're also encouraging homeowners to plant new front yard trees - if they have space - to replenish the urban canopy. These trees are supplied and planted free of charge by the city (just call 905 546-2489 and ask to be put through to the Street Tree Planting Program.)



We're running Junior Trees Count sessions, where youngsters are invited to take part in outdoor nature activities such as how to build a shelter in the wild and identifying bird calls.

You're invited to join us at a volunteer appreciation evening on Thursday August 23rd at 7.30 pm, at the Dundas Valley Montessori School, 108 Park St West, Dundas. Then in early 2008, we will present the full report of our Trees Count findings to the community.

Many individual Dundasians have financially contributed to support the inventory work. We've also received grants from the Dundas Rotary Club and the Hamilton-Wentworth Stewardship Council, and our coordinator is partly supported by the Canadian government's summer student subsidy program.

Project Co-ordinator Juby Lee: 905-577-5755
email: treescount@hotmail.com

LEGAL TOOL USED TO FIGHT INDUSTRIAL EMISSIONS

Every few years, we take our cars into a Drive Clean shop for a check-up. If it passes, you can renew your registration and go on your merry way. If it fails the emissions test, you must do repairs, or take it off the road. It's Ontario's way of ensuring we do the right thing for the air we breathe.

So, we'd expect industry to have the same set of rules: keep

CITY URGED TO TAKE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

EH is continuing to press city officials to adopt policies to deal with global climate change. In February, we made a formal presentation to councillors of our ten-point plan for immediate short-term steps, then followed up in April with a detailed commentary on the climate implications of then pending budget decisions.

Last month we submitted a 4500-word review of the city's proposed master transportation plan, that emphasized the failure of the authors to even mention global climate change in their 30-year plan. While the draft plan calls for more emphasis on transit, cycling and walking, it continues to make road expansion a priority both in spending increases and by assuming that road spending will be accommodated within the city's regular budget while transit improvements will be dependent on funding from other levels of government.

If you would like a copy of the Environment Hamilton submission, please contact the EH offices.

North Hamilton residents and EH file Application for Review of Dofasco's KOBM Melt Shop

their systems clean, test their smokestacks and, if they pass, permits that are kept up-to-date. But this is not the case. In the year since North Hamilton soot fallouts drew public attention, we've seen repeated emission violations. They arrive as big plumes of dark, black smoke, from the same troubled stacks.



Companies must have Certificates of Approval (CofAs) that spell out conditions for their business to protect our health and the environment. The Ministry of the Environment uses CofAs to ensure industry complies with environmental law.

Environment Hamilton recently examined the CofAs for problematic stacks. We were shocked by what we found:

- Some stack permits were more than 30 years old.
- Many had no operating conditions.
- No stack testing was required.

So, there's no way of tracking soot fallout back to the industry

responsible.

Now we are helping residents to use the Environmental Bill of Rights legal tool to stop the soot fallout and clean up emissions.

Last month, we submitted our first "Application for Review" for the Dofasco melt shop stack. This involves asking that the ministry to update their CofA, add strict operating conditions and test their stacks. We also want a phone number posted on company property so neighbours can call the company when they see a problem.

It's not the first time local residents have filed such an

application through the Environmental Bill of Rights. The 30-year-old SWARU incinerator was forced to close because they didn't have sufficient emission controls to capture mercury and dioxins – and that situation was revealed by citizen watchdogs.

Our position is: We should all play by the same rules. If the province's Drive Clean program holds drivers accountable for tailpipe emissions, we expect industry to be accountable for their stack emissions.

Until the system improves, we will continue to examine the permits that govern industry in Hamilton – one stack at a time – until we all breathe easier.