

Environmentalists demonstrated at Tilson's office

By James Matthews

Everybody needs to be more concerned about the direction in which Canada is headed regarding the environment, according to Ian McGugan.

And to highlight that message, McGugan and about a dozen others protested recently in front of Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson's Orangeville constituency office.

It was one of more than 130 Defend Our Climate demonstrations across Canada to show opposition to tar sands expansion and pipeline construction. McGugan is the Dufferin-Caledon Green Party's communications chairperson.

He and his compatriots demonstrated along the sidewalk, brandishing signs that were read by motorists and talking to passersby about their environmental concerns.

They include increasing weather severity around the globe, derailments of trains carrying crude and other products and mishaps involving by-products of Alberta tar sands refining. McGugan said such events and the perceived favour of the federal government for industry are reasons Canadians need to be concerned about government's direction in supporting oil companies.

"We'd like them to consider alternative fuels and new energy instead of extracting oil," he said, adding that economies need to be built on more than the petroleum industry.

"We need oil companies to evolve into energy companies," McGugan said. "That will help the world."

He said people need to talk more about the environment and how it can be saved. Such talk needs to happen, and there's no better time than the present, he maintained.

"There's no real plan to ensure we have a sustainable future," he said, and added people should ask their MPs about their thoughts on such topics. Especially, he said, given there's a federal election in the future.

"More and more Canadians are confused and are looking for leadership," McGugan said. "We need to plan for our sustainable future. If we don't, we're in big trouble. You can talk about the future as a problem or an opportunity."