



Citizens Opposed to Paving the Escarpment

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For Immediate Release

FRIGID RECEPTION FOR HUDAK

Flamborough, January 17, 2011

Twenty-two people braved the frigid early morning temperature for over an hour to give Progressive Conservative Leader Tim Hudak a message. No escarpment highway. Its not needed. It's not wanted and it's not affordable.

Citizens Opposed to Paving the Escarpment (COPE) organized the protest in response to Hudak's stated support for building the Mid-Peninsula Highway, now known as the Niagara to GTA corridor, on the Niagara Escarpment if elected as Premier. Hudak was speaking at a Flamborough Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting. "It takes a hot topic to get people out 7:00AM when its -17 outside. People are passionate about saving the Niagara Escarpment and farmland," said Susan McMaster, Co-Chair of COPE. Upon arrival at the event, Hudak immediately entered the building, avoiding the protesters.

COPE is committed to ensuring there is no new highway ripped through the Niagara Escarpment, a national treasure and UNESCO reserve. Arguments for the highway hinge on murky economic benefits and need to address congestion in the GTA. The Niagara GTA highway wouldn't address either issue, said McMaster. "The supposed benefits are based on highly questionable population forecasts and exclude many factors. There has yet to be a meaningful cost benefit analysis on this highway. Furthermore, it would run through the Greenbelt that is supposedly protected from development. And if its jobs we want, lets fix the decaying infrastructure we already have. Regarding the need to alleviate GTA traffic congestion, the highway loops through Flamborough and terminates in Burlington at the 407. It would only get traffic to the GTA congestion faster," said McMaster.

COPE also wants to highlight the importance of this issue for all Ontario taxpayers. "It may not be your backyard – but it's your back pocket," McMaster said. Hudak is driving to spend billions of dollars for a highway that isn't needed. That's a cost we'll all bear. The group wants all government representatives to get the message.

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Web Site: Citizens Opposed to Paving the Escarpment, www.stophighway.com