

## Erin car rally protest urges town to reconsider wastewater plant (8 photos)

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1 / 8 One supporter went to the next level with car decorating by pulling a trailer with a dummy on a toilet. | Keegan Kozolanka



ERIN – A car rally in Erin Saturday had a big turnout from locals and those from nearby municipalities to drive home a message – they aren't on board with a wastewater treatment plant in Erin.

Saturday morning saw the protest start at the Erin Legion Branch with cars driving in a continuous loop down to the proposed wastewater plant site at 10th Line and Wellington Road 52 then back into Erin.

Supporters decked out their cars with toilet paper, plungers, homemade fish and one even pulling a trailer with a dummy sitting on a toilet.

Ken Cowling, who has been marching in protest at the proposed site for two months, is adamant the plant is bad for the area and said he's read a lot about issues at other plants.

"The plants in Tottenham, Shelburne and Bradford have failed, all of them had failures and Bradford got fined," Cowling said.

A concern from residents and conservation groups is the impact it will have on coldwater brook trout that inhabit the West Credit River where treated effluent will be dumped.

Ann Seymour from the West Credit River Watch said the plan is flawed because 7.2 million litres of effluent will be dumped into too small of a site which will raise the temperature and impact a nearby brook trout spawning location.

"Growth is understood but this is excessive," Seymour said. "We would like the Town of Erin to reconsider the volume of effluent going into the river."

Residents from towns downstream of the river also came out for the car rally.

Cowling said there were supporters from Belfountain, Forks of the Credit, Caledon and other towns as this plant will impact their communities too.



"This is a downstream water source and they're putting 7.2 million litres of effluent in there that doesn't remove microplastics or endotoxins or medicinal ingredients," Cowling explained.

Some residents question what the cost to homeowners will be to hook up to the sewer system.

Previous estimates from the town put the cost to residents up to \$20,000 but this could depend on the amount of government funding the project receives.

Locals Larry Scott and Bob Gibson, who took part in the car rally, both agreed they don't think this is an honest estimate and are concerned they'll be stuck with a huge bill for something they don't even want.

The Town of Erin has been working toward building a wastewater plant for nearly 25 years to address projected housing growth and to get current residents off the septic system.

Mayor Allan Alls said in an email the plant is an essential addition to the community.

"The Town of Erin is behind many other communities of our size and it's time for us to make this important investment to grow in a measured way over the next 20 years," Alls said.

He further said he fully appreciates concerns and welcomes input at all stages of the project.

"I am committed to ensuring these concerns are addressed, particularly those regarding the environmental impacts of the project," Alls said.

"This project is moving forward with one of the strictest sets of environmental requirements in Canada, and has been supported by a series of comprehensive assessments and studies from leading independent experts."

Cowling was beaming with pride seeing the turnout and support for this cause. He said he's been putting in long days to respond to requests to signs, even falling asleep at his computer in one case.

"It's not just Ken the trout fisherman against this," Cowling said.



***About the Author: Keegan Kozolanka***

Keegan Kozolanka covers civic matters under the Local Journalism initiative, which is funded by the Government of Canada

**Comments (5)**

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