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CANADA

Car rally Saturday against Erin wastewater treatment plant

By **Joshua Santos**, Local Journalism Initiative reporter Orangeville Banner

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Opponents of a wastewater treatment plant will host a car rally on Saturday, Feb. 20, in Erin.

The plant continues to have overwhelming support from council, and it is expected to be built this year.

“I think it’s despicable what these people have proposed because it’s unnecessary,” said Ken Cowling, a resident of the town for 41 years. “I’m going to keep on fighting.”

The rally is a four-mile loop beginning at the Erin Legion on Dundas Street, then to the proposed plant on 10th Line and Wellington Rd. 52. From there, drivers will return to town and continue that cycle until lunchtime. One lap will take about 15 minutes to complete. It will be held from 9 a.m. to noon.

Cowling said he contacted the OPP to make them aware his group would not break any COVID-19 restrictions.

“Numerous residents of the town have reached out to me,” said Cowling. “Some people want to see this abomination go in, which will be the ruination of the town.”

No taxpayer dollars would be allocated to the plant’s establishment, and the developer would pay for it. The plant would cost \$67 million, and the wastewater collection system is estimated to cost \$20.3 million.

Residents will still have to pay \$4,000 to \$8,000 to connect to the system through a private contractor and then \$15,000 to \$18,000 for their share of it.

Cowling is against the plant, saying It may impact the native Brook trout, as it is expected to discharge up to 7.2 million litres of treated warm temperature effluent into the West Credit River daily. The trout needs cold water to survive and spawn.

He also wants his children and grandchildren to grow up in the same pristine and beautiful environment he had grown up in Erin.

“That pristine river cannot handle what will go in there,” said Cowling. “I’m also concerned for the people downstream that might be using the West Credit River as a water source.”

The Izaak Walton Fly Fishing Club and Belfountain Community Organization are two of many to have also voiced opposition to the plant for similar reasons.

The plant will be able to accommodate 14,500 new residents. Under the Wellington County official plan, the town is expected to grow by up to 10,000 by 2041. He said when spoke to council, they pointed to the benefits of the plant, how it would be better for businesses and help lower taxes.