

April 18, 2011

Vincent Crisanti
Councillor Ward 1
100 Queen St. West, 2nd floor
Toronto M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Crisanti:

Earth Day is celebrated each year to remind us of the responsibility we all bear in addressing the environmental crisis facing our world. Cities have a particularly important role in this effort, and Toronto has been a leader in environmental policies for many years. But there is a new political dimension in Toronto which many fear will result in that leadership being abandoned, and that possibility is of great concern to the labour movement.

The Labour Council has been a strong supporter and advocate of environmental activism on a wide variety of issues. From mass public transit, to safe sewage, to banning toxics and pesticides, we have joined with others to call for decisive action from municipal governments. In the mid 1990's the construction unions first lobbied to create the Better Building Partnership to undertake an extensive program of energy retrofits of major buildings. More than a decade ago, CUPE Local 416 partnered with the Toronto Environmental Alliance to propose a major waste diversion program for organics, which eventually became the green bin program.

The Labour Council outlined the basis of a green economic development strategy for the city, which was adopted by Council in 2009. We welcomed the Tower Renewal program, and pledged to outreach to young people in marginalized communities to offer apprenticeships for those projects. More recently our unions worked with the Good Jobs for All coalition to propose green jobs for the Kodak lands, and a major green jobs program installing locally made solar panels on public buildings.

Sometimes these measures have been opposed, either for philosophical reasons or for concerns about extra costs. But time and again, it has been shown that well-planned environmental measures save money in the long run, as well as making a

priceless contribution to reducing CO2 emissions and other pollution. When one considers a triple bottom line that factors in social, economic and ecological costs and benefits, these measure are clear winners.

That is why we want to draw your attention to the need to safeguard the city's environmental leadership in the future. There will be pressures during the upcoming Services Reviews and the budget process to reduce Toronto's investment in green initiatives. We urge you to reject any such approach, and in fact to strengthen the commitment of our city to a greener future.

I trust you will give this issue the very serious attention it warrants. We all are responsible for the kind of world we leave future generations, and you are in a key position to help make it a better one.

Sincerely,

John Cartwright
President
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