

Media Release
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Blue Community vote highlights need for water debate in Ontario election, says Council of Canadians

The Council of Canadians is congratulating Tiny Township for becoming Ontario's first Blue Community. The Blue Communities Project is an initiative of the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and in Quebec with Eau Secours. It calls on municipalities to recognize water as a human right, to ban the sale of bottled water in civic spaces, and to support the public ownership of water utilities. Tiny Township passed motions affirming all three criteria at a council meeting last night. "I am very pleased with the direction taken by the Township of Tiny in cooperation with the Council of Canadians," says Tiny Township Mayor Ray Millar. "It is a small step like this, taken by municipalities not unlike our own, that will increase national awareness of these very significant issues. I am constantly reminded of the words of Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Thanks to all."

"Local efforts like this to protect water are multiplying, and highlight the need for Ontario political parties to spell out before Election Day what they will do to protect water as a public trust, a commons, and a human right," says Council of Canadians chairperson Maude Barlow, who notes that the Melancthon Mega-quarry's impacts on the local watershed were a key issue the September 7 all-candidates debate in the riding of Dufferin-Caledon, one of several ridings in the Ontario election where water is a prominent concern.

"Tiny Township becoming Ontario's first Blue Community is the perfect legacy of Site 41, and we hope it will be the first of many Blue Communities throughout Ontario," says Meera Karunanathan, national water campaigner for the Council of Canadians, referring to the controversial landfill that was to be located in the Township of Tiny on top of the Alliston aquifer.

The township had long expressed its opposition to the garbage dump. The dump was finally defeated in September 2009. In the 2010 municipal elections several water justice activists in the area who had campaigned against Site 41 won office, including Tiny Township's current mayor Ray Millar. The Township of Tiny in Simcoe County in south-central Ontario has a population of just over 10,000 people and is made up of communities including Bluewater Beach, East Tay Point, Georgina Beach, Nottawaga Beach, Wyebridge and Wyevale.

Tiny, Ontario is now the third blue community in Canada. On March 22 this year, Burnaby, British Columbia became the first blue community in Canada, followed by Victoria, BC on June 23. It is hoped that Kingston, ON (on September 20), Port Alberni, BC (pending a staff report on bottled water), and Pointe-Claire, Quebec will also become blue communities in the near future.

More information about the Blue Communities Project is at:

<http://www.canadians.org/bluecommunities>.

Photo: Township of Tiny council <http://www.township.tiny.on.ca/townhall/COUNCIL/index.htm>