

**For immediate release**

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**Prominent Orillia citizens endorse collective climate action**

People of Orillia have been called to action.

More than 50 noteworthy members of the community have joined with Sustainable Orillia to endorse the following statement outlining climate crisis challenges and opportunities facing the city, post-COVID-19.

“The Sustainable Orillia board of directors is very gratified to see this level of support among the citizens of Orillia and surrounding area”, said Stan Mathewson, President of the organization. “We thank them for their leadership, and we invite others to add their support and make the same commitment by signing on to the statement on our website”, he added.

More information, including Sustainable Orillia’s First Anniversary Report, can be found on Sustainable Orillia’s website <sustainableorillia.ca>.

The statement follows, along with the names of its supporters.

**Today: the COVID-19 crisis. Tomorrow: climate change**

The COVID-19 crisis offers us a chance to reflect on what’s most important to us in Orillia. Our health, the health of our city and of our planet, must be near the top of the list. In a post-COVID-19 future, it will be increasingly apparent how much our economic and social success depends upon the ability of nature to provide for us.

As we recover from the pandemic, we will be reflecting on our familiar pre-COVID-19 patterns and habits. We know there will be no going back to business as usual. Instead, we have an opportunity to re-invent and re-imagine the way we do things. Rather than bouncing back, we can bounce forward.

Climate scientists, medical professionals and political leaders are all hoping this moment will be a transformative turning point when our efforts to combat one crisis will inspire action against another - the climate crisis. They are calling for a public mobilization equal to - or even greater than - the one required by COVID-19.

COVID-19 has shown us that the people of Orillia are willing to make sacrifices and can take radical, collective action when we need to. Our response to the pandemic is a dress rehearsal for an even bigger challenge: ensuring that we can thrive indefinitely and more equitably within the finite limits of nature.

As we re-build our Orillia economy, we commit to taking this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to undertake and invest in sustainability - in projects that will not only create jobs but also create a city that’s even better than it was before. Our lives must be different from now on. From now on, we are truly all in this together.

*“We need to turn the recovery into a real opportunity to do things right for the future.” - UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres*

**In the months and years ahead of us in Orillia, we commit to becoming a community that:**

* travels far fewer kilometres in gas- and diesel-fueled vehicles, and many more by foot, bicycle and public transit,
* boasts many more electric vehicles and charging stations,
* substantially expands renewable energy sources,
* builds and retrofits energy-efficient, low-carbon houses and other buildings that are much, much better at separating heat from cold,
* ensures everyone is permanently housed, local food production is increased, and jobs are created,
* shifts our financial investments away from fossil fuels towards greener choices that do not put nature further in debt,
* ensures access to clean water and clean air for all,
* adds more plant-based sources of protein to our diets,
* plants more trees and pollinator gardens, and grows food in our own or community gardens,
* protects our lakes from damaging storm-water run-off,
* phases out single-use plastic and reduces food waste,
* knows that the true measure of wealth is our health - both personal and planetary,
* acknowledges and celebrates the positive contribution every Orillia citizen can make to health and well-being.

I/We commit to making Orillia a city our grandchildren’s grandchildren will enjoy, be proud of, and appreciate.

(signed)

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| Amanda Judd | President, Designated Early Childhood Educators of Simcoe County |
| Amy Chevis | President, Simcoe County Elementary Occasional Teachers' Federation  |
| Anderson Charters | Orillia Citizen of the Year 2005 |
| Anna Proctor | Publisher, Simcoe North LIFE (online) |
| Annie McCourt | Board member, The Sharing Place |
| Ben Lowry | President, Lowry Building Company |
| Bruce Waite | Lawyer, HGR Graham Partners LLP |
| Carol Deimling | Teacher, Consultant |
| Charles Pachter | Contemporary Canadian artist |
| Daniel Tucker | Youth climate activist |
| Dave Dawson | Community Editor, Orillia Matters |
| David VanAlstyne | Secretary, Electric Vehicle Society; Chapter Lead, Electric Vehicle Society Barrie-Orillia Chapter |
| Doris Middleton | Former provincial candidate |
| Doug Cooper | Local artist & art instructor; former member, Committee of Adjustment, Ramara Township |
| Dr. Aaron & Tara Barnett | Family Physician and leaders of the Hillside Bible Chapel Day Camp |
| Dr. Charles Gardner | Medical Officer of Health, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit |
| Dr. Ellen Field | Adjunct Professor and Postdoctoral Fellow, Lakehead University Orillia |
| Dr. Linda Rodenburg | Director, Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning, Lakehead University Orillia |
| Dr. Peter Deimling | Family Physician and Founding Lead Physician of the Couchiching Family Health Team |
| Dr. Robert Sullivan | Past President, Couchiching Conservancy |
| Gill Tillman | Orillia Citizen of the Year (2017), former Chair of Ontario Winter Games (2018), President of Couchiching Jubilee House  |
| Gillian Lowry | Artist |
| Heather Kerslake | Ceramic artist, volunteer and spokesperson for the local arts community |
| Jamie Ross | President, Couchiching Conservancy |
| Janet Bigham | President, Simcoe County Elementary Teachers' Federation |
| Janet Grand | Founder and former owner of The Birdhouse Nature Co., Founding Director of the Couchiching Conservancy |
| John Bell | Owner, Pioneer Handcraft Furniture; champion of Orillia heritage  |
| John Morgan | Chair, AWARE Simcoe  |
| Kathy Hunt | Marketing communications specialist |
| Kim Fedderson | Principal Emeritus, Lakehead University Orillia |
| Kirk McLean | Partner, Home Hardware Building Centre |
| Lance Anderson | Musician - composer, producer, director and performer |
| Margaret Prophet | Executive Director, Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition |
| Mark Bisset  | Executive Director, Couchiching Conservancy |
| Michael Jones | Past Chair, Orillia Cultural Roundtable; Co-Chair, Mariposa Roundtable; author of *The Soul of Place: Re-imagining Leadership Through Nature, Art and Community* |
| Pam Fulford | Professional biologist and mediator  |
| Philip Jackman | Journalist (retired), photographer, former OMAH board member, currently member of the Mariposa Folk Festival Promotions Committee |
| Raquel Ness | Principal Lawyer, Ness Law |
| Roger Kerslake | Ceramic artist, musician |
| Ron Reid | Co-founder of the Couchiching Conservancy |
| Roy Menagh | Order of Orillia 2016, Founder and former Director of Orillia Vocal Ensemble |
| Shannon O’Donnell | Owner, The Roost, former candidate for Mayor of Ramara Township |
| Sherry Lawson | Anishinaabe Nokomis, storyteller |
| Susan Waite | Former Volunteer Co-ordinator, Kiwanis Music Festival; Committee member, Humanities 101, Lakehead University Orillia |
| Ted Duncan | President, OMAH; President, Simcoe County Historical Association |
| Ted Markle | Mayor’s appointee, Economic Recovery Task Force; board member Mariposa Folk Foundation and Soldiers Memorial Hospital; former Chair, OMAH |
| Tony Telford | President, Orser Electric |
| Tyler Knight | Owner/videographer/photographer, KnightVision |
| Valerie Powell | Former federal and provincial candidate |
| William Tillman | Family Physician |
| Zac Waite | President, Sustainable Orillia Youth Council |

Sustainable Orillia is a network of citizens committed to improving the quality of life, the health and wellness, and the environment in our community. Mandated and supported by the Mayor and Council, Sustainable Orillia provides an overarching framework for programs and partnerships that target more sustainable practices across six critical sectors.

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