

Government of the people, by the corporations, for the corporations

In 2008, economics student Tim DeChristopher went to an auction set up by the Bush administration for the oil and gas industry. He bid \$1.8 million for the right to drill on 14 parcels of Utah wilderness, much of it near national parks, and drove up prices for other pieces of land that he bid on but didn't win. Although DeChristopher later tried to raise money online and offered to pay for the land leases, the government claimed he had no intention of paying and convicted him in March on two felony counts.

On July 27, he was sentenced to two years in jail and three years probation and ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine. He was escorted from the Utah courtroom in handcuffs. Now he's a criminal.

During the trial, the judge refused to allow DeChristopher to discuss his motivation. Because of that, and other reasons, his lawyers are launching an appeal. In his statement to the court before sentencing, DeChristopher said he had wanted "to stand in the way of an illegitimate auction that threatened my future." The leases were later cancelled because the Obama administration found that sufficient environmental reviews had not been conducted.

In his inspiring speech, DeChristopher also spoke eloquently about the contradictions in the law around resource extraction. He pointed out that in West Virginia, where he was raised, a state investigation found that coal-mining company Massey Energy, which often blasts away the tops of mountains to get at the coal, broke the law 62,923 times in the 10 years leading

Science Matters

By David Suzuki



up to a disaster that killed 29 people in 2010. The company, which contributed millions of dollars to elect many appeals court judges in the state, was rarely penalized for those violations.

DeChristopher argued that his mother had tried every legal method to get coal companies to comply with the law. "She commented at hearings, wrote petitions and filed lawsuits, and many have continued to do ever since, to no avail," he said, adding, "I actually have great respect for the rule of law, because I see what happens when it doesn't exist, as is the case with the fossil fuel industry."

The trial, and the relatively tough sentence, hinged on the supposed damage DeChristopher caused. According to the government, oil companies were financially hurt because his actions drove the price up to an average of \$125 an acre from the \$12-an acre offered for land he did not bid on. That's despite the fact that companies willingly paid the higher prices and were allowed to withdraw their bids after DeChristopher was charged. And the leases were later cancelled anyway.

For his part, DeChristopher argued that "the only loss that I intended to cause was the loss of secrecy by which the gov-

ernment gave away public property for private profit. As I actually stated in the trial, my intent was to shine a light on a corrupt process and get the government to take a second look at how this auction was conducted."

DeChristopher's ordeal exposes the massive power of the fossil fuel industry. Governments, including the U.S. and Canada's, often do far more to promote the interests of this industry than to protect people's rights and health. Those who violate the law and put the lives of citizens and their children and grandchildren at great risk through pollution and destructive industrial practices often get let off scot-free or receive a slap on the wrist, while those who use civil disobedience to challenge this imbalance are hit with the full force of the law.

Tim DeChristopher said he does not want to be a martyr; he just wants people to join him. "If the government is going to refuse to step up to that responsibility to defend a liveable future, I believe that creates a moral imperative for me and other citizens. My future, and the future of everyone I care about, is being traded for short term profits. I take that very personally."

We should all take it personally. We aren't out to shut down the fossil fuel industry immediately. That would be impossible as well as impractical. But surely a sustainable, healthy future ought to come before a corporation's right to profit.

Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation editorial and communications specialist Ian Hanington.

Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org.

Eight ways to save back-to-school cash

Every year parents spend significant amounts of money on back-to-school supplies and expenses. While there's not much parents can do about tuition, there are ways to save on additional expenses, including clothing. Restocking a student's wardrobe can be costly, but savvy Moms and Dads can lessen the blow in a variety of ways.

Although students may not yet be ready to head back to class, both parents and children may not be looking forward to school shopping for a number of reasons including expenses, time, intimidation and cranky kids.

Whether school shopping is fun or feared, it's a necessity so here are tips to make the process a bit easier and help parents save money as well.

1. Assess what is already on hand. Shopping doesn't have to mean creating an entirely new wardrobe from scratch, but supplementing existing clothing with new pieces. Unless a child has entirely outgrown pants and shirts from last year, chances are there will be some clothes that are still usable and appropriate. Take a day or two to go through kids' wardrobes and set aside items that can be used for school. Make a list of new items to purchase.

2. Establish a budget. Set a limit as to how much will be spent on each child and don't stray over that limit. Around \$150 to \$200 may be adequate to pick up a few basics.

4. Buy new shoes. Shoes are one element of a ward-

robe that may need to be entirely new. Active children tend to wear out shoes quickly. One pair of sneakers and one pair of dressier shoes, like oxfords, or ballet flats for girls, may be adequate.

5. Shop sales. If the weather is warm, it's possible to save money on clearance T-shirts and shorts that stores are putting on sale to make room for next season's items. Don't fill a student's wardrobe with heavy sweatshirts or sweaters at this juncture.

6. Intermingle designer with discount. Not every item in a child's wardrobe has to be trendy. Layering items, such as T-shirts, can often be picked up for a discount in stores. Outer items, like jeans or some shirts, can be picked up from the trendier stores. Shop their sales and see if they offer coupons by signing up to loyalty Web sites.

7. Go early in the day. Although it may be a challenge get the kids up and dressed to visit stores when they're in vacation mode, arriving early means thinner crowds and refreshed children. Kids who are tired or hungry can be prone to meltdowns. Pack snacks and drinks to be on the safe side. Some stores offer early bird special sales, which can make shopping once the doors open

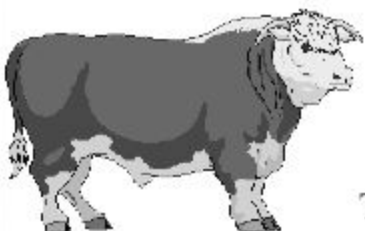
even more advantageous.

8. Do some online shopping, too. Once the children have gone to bed for the evening, do some uninterrupted online shopping. Comparison shop and figure out if buying online is a good deal after factoring in shipping costs.

School shopping signals the end of vacation time. Make the most of the opportunity to save and reduce stress when shopping.

What's Your Beef?

Put it in a letter to the Editor!



It's better than just chewing your cud!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.



BOTTLE DRIVE

Acton/Rockwood

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13th

Start Time: 9:30am

Please support the Acton Tanners and save your bottles for pick up on Saturday. If you are not home you can leave your bottles on the front step for pick up.

Due to limited amount of players collecting we will try to get to as many homes as possible and apologize if we are not able to make it to your home.

We thank you for supporting the Acton Tanners Minor Hockey Association.

ACTON HOCKEY and SKATING SCHOOL



Registration

For Ages 4 to 9 years
AT ACTON ARENA

Sat., August 20
9 am until full

For more information contact
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