

CANDIDATES TALK CLIMATE CHANGE DURING GEORGETOWN DEBATE

MELANIE HENNESSEY
mhennessey@metroland.com

Climate change and the environment were the hot topics of the evening during a Georgetown candidates' debate on Thursday, Oct. 3.

The five federal election candidates for Wellington-Halton Hills squared off before a packed audience at the John Elliott Theatre as part of the nationwide 100 Debates on the Environment series, with the local instalment co-hosted by the Georgetown chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women, the Halton Environmental Network and the Halton Hills Public Library.

Conservative incumbent Michael Chong, Green party contender Ralph Martin, Liberal

candidate Lesley Barron, the NDP's Andrew Bascombe and People's Party of Canada candidate Syl Carle responded to four prepared questions that focused on the environment, in addition to audience questions on everything from firearms policy to affordable seniors' housing.

Here's what the candidates had to say when asked: What are the key elements of an action plan that you will advocate for to make sure Canada meets its international obligations to reduce greenhouse gas pollution?

• Chong said rather than carbon tax, he would support a sector-by-sector regulatory approach to reduce emissions.

He also emphasized the need for all parties to reach a consensus on the

issue.

"The fact of the matter is both the Conservative and Liberal governments have failed to uphold our climate change commitments," he said. "That's why I think we need MPs from all parties to work together to hold governments accountable on this very important issue."

• Martin told the audience the Green party has a made-in-Canada plan to address climate change called Mission: Possible.

He detailed aspects of the plan, such as retrofitting buildings across Canada to be carbon neutral, which he said would create jobs while reducing heating costs and greenhouse gases.

"Our goal is to reduce greenhouse gases 60 per cent by 2030 and get to net zero by 2050," he said, also emphasizing the impor-

tance of parties working together on the issue.

• Barron cited a variety of Liberal plans to tackle the issue, including carbon pricing, tax breaks for green tech businesses, electric vehicle rebates and investments in public transit.

"Trying to reduce emissions without carbon pricing is like trying to treat diabetes without insulin - ineffective and dangerous," she said.

She went on to assert that "the Conservatives won't act to save our planet, and we don't have time to waste waiting for climate change deniers to change their minds."

• Bascombe said he would support investments in low-carbon infrastructure like public transit and advocate for smarter, greener land uses.

He also spoke of calling for a referendum to find out how far the public is willing to go to address the climate challenges, and removing barriers to technology that can address the present and future situation.

"Most of all, stop talking about it and take action," he said.

• Carle said a People's Party government would address the climate by "being prepared and not scared."

He said the PPC is committed to ensuring Canada has the resources to respond to all weather

emergencies with equipment and personnel during and afterwards.

He added, "Global warming has stalled now for the past 20 years and it has been receding for the past three years as the sun becomes quiet in a state classified as a grand solar minimum."

Carle's response drew a mixture of applause and booing from the audience.

The candidates are set to meet again in Georgetown on Oct. 10 for a Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce breakfast debate at the Club at North Halton.

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