

# Federal budget should reveal Kyoto plan: MP

BY MIKE ADLER  
Staff Writer

In 10 days, York Region residents should finally know how the federal Liberals plan to keep their word on climate change.

This month's federal budget is key to fulfilling Canada's pledge on the Kyoto Protocol, which goes into effect Wednesday and requires deep cuts in the greenhouse gases this country produces.

As parliamentary secretary to Environment Minister Stephane Dion, Richmond Hill MP Bryon Wilfert said he's worked to make the budget a "green" one.

"Canada does not sign international treaties such as Kyoto unless we are prepared to meet those obligations," he said, this week after telling Finance Minister Ralph Goodale his department, which Mr. Wilfert said has not offered Canadians enough incentives to reduce fossil-fuel use, must "step up to the plate" in this budget.

Critics have said the government has not done much to ensure emission cuts in industries producing most of Canada's greenhouse gases, which scientists say are causing global warming as they collect in the Earth's atmosphere.

Acknowledging this, the government is making it clear all sectors must do their part to meet Kyoto goals, Mr. Wilfert said.

"You can have incentives for early good behaviour and you can have a stick for bad behaviour," he added.

York-Simcoe Tory MP Peter Van Loan, however, said he doesn't think the Liberals really intend to honour their Kyoto commitment.

The treaty Canada signed in 1997 and ratified in 2002 is "unbalanced and against Canada's interests", Mr. Van Loan said.

His party, he added, fears the Liberal Kyoto action plan will "largely consist of giving money to places like Russia" for carbon credits when the government should be investing to reduce pollution here.

"We are going to pay money for the right to pollute. To me, that's a lose-lose."

Mr. Wilfert replied buying carbon credits will install Canadian green technology in places such as China, India and Brazil, helping Canadian companies gain experience in a growing market.

As Kyoto takes effect, reaction in

York Region's small-business community has been muted, despite continued statements from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce that the government's greenhouse-gas reduction plans will drive investment to the United States, which didn't sign the treaty.

Divided over its ratification, members of the Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce are simply waiting to see what happens, said Vincent De Angelis, chairperson of the group's advocacy committee.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber president Helene Johnson said her members haven't raised the issue, but she's still concerned the United States is not involved. "You can't do it alone," she noted.

The government's voluntary approach to industrial reductions has clearly failed, said University of Toronto professor Doug Macdonald, environmental studies director at Innis College.

"When we say something's serious and we really need to accomplish it, we use law," he said.

The government "wasted" five years by talking to industries in secret, but its efforts to secure reductions have been more vigorous lately, said Shawn-Patrick Stensil, atmosphere and energy director for the Sierra Club of Canada.

"I think what we're seeing is the government's getting its act together," he said.

## PROTOCOL RATIFIED IN 2002

Most scientists agree human activities are warming the Earth by producing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that trap heat in the atmosphere.

Agreeing action was needed to reduce climate change, Canada attended a 1992 convention in Rio, Brazil and, in 1997, signed a treaty on greenhouse-gas reductions in Kyoto, Japan. Canada ratified this Kyoto Protocol in 2002 and, because enough countries also ratified it, Kyoto goes into effect next week.

For Kyoto, Canada pledged to lower its greenhouse-gas emission to 6 per cent below 1990 levels but those levels have gone up 20 to 25 per cent since 1990.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Jack Thornton and daughter Melissa, of Holland Landing, received an award in the One-Tonne Challenge at the Windfall Ecology Centre in Newmarket Wednesday for exchanging an SUV for a Toyota Prius, which runs on gasoline and electricity.

# Changing cars, light bulbs help One-Tonne Challenge

Group's efforts help Canada battle climate change

BY MIKE ADLER  
Staff Writer

Driving a sport utility vehicle is nice, Jack Thornton says, but he didn't really need one.

And by trading in his GMC Avalanche for a Toyota Prius, the Tim Hortons owner from Holland Landing completed the federal One-Tonne Challenge.

He had room to spare: switching from his gas-thirsty truck to the gasoline-electric hybrid sedan keeps five tonnes of greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere each year, almost as much as the 5.5 tonnes the average Canadian produces from all activities.

People now stop him to ask about the Prius and Mr. Thornton figures driving one sets a better example for his daughter, Melissa, 10.

"I get a lot of laughs from friends of mine, but it's an amazing statement," he said.

York Region residents taking the

challenge help Canada meet its Kyoto Protocol commitments and lower their own energy bills with some simple changes, said Christina Alcorn, One-Tonne Challenge coordinator for Windfall Ecoworks. Windfall is a Newmarket group encouraging people to try it.

"It's not going to affect our lives drastically," she said.

People could start by installing compact fluorescent lightbulbs at home, which is what Michael Bourgeois' family did in Ballantrae.

"It doesn't need as much power and it's a brighter flare," said the 11-year-old, who points out his family will save money in the long run.

"My house is totally full of them."

People can also carpool, which Daphne-Ross did. She saved two tonnes a year by splitting the driving with a co-worker between her managerial job in Markham and home in Ballantrae.

"The trip seems to go by a lot faster when you have someone to chat with," said Ms Ross, whose employer, the Town of Markham, guarantees a cab ride home if her ride leaves early.

You can also beat the challenge by letting a certified company do an

energy audit of your home through the EnerGuide for Houses program.

Carole Houlihan of King Township did and she eliminated 5.9 tonnes of greenhouse gases a year.

First, an evaluator fitted her drafty house with a nylon blower door, using a fan on it to depressurize the house and find the location of leaks.

He then walked her through her house, showing Ms Houlihan where air was leaking from every room.

Because she fixed the leaks — putting a flap on the dryer, sealing around cracks, new weatherstripping around the door — and installed a high-efficiency gas furnace, Ms Houlihan received a \$1,000 federal grant.

"Our heating bill is half of what it was," she said.

The environmental group is encouraging people to take advantage of such locally available programs and will recognize other people who completed the challenge at its Windfall Ecology Festival in June, Ms Alcorn said.

To find out more about the challenge, call 1-800-622-6232 or go to the federal government's climate change website, [www.climatechange.gc.ca](http://www.climatechange.gc.ca)

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