

OPINION

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Blue box cop waste of cash

Re: Blue box cop would catch recycle cheaters, Sept. 20

Now I have heard everything. Getting \$70,000 a year to check the contents of people's blue boxes?

Where do I sign up for this job? I wonder what qualifications a person might have to have to apply?

Count me in! And to think, all these 23 years I have struggled. Where does it end?

This is a blatant example of why municipalities, towns and cities are in such financial dire straits.

CHARLOTTE STAMP
BALLANTRAE

Town 'ruined by development'

I am writing on behalf of everyone who has to suffer seeing our beautiful community of Stouffville becoming ruined by development.

Lately, when I am walking through town, I will come across a new subdivision or building sprouting out of the ground.

The newest development site I noticed was for the land at Main Street and Tenth Line.

This piece of land is one of the few natural fields Stouffville has left and once it becomes developed, there is not a way

in the world it will come back to its natural state.

If the land gets developed, is it not only the environment that is the issue. There will also be controversy with traffic. New lots mean there will be many more people driving out onto the roads causing confusion.

Picture the problems that would occur with cars coming from all directions. Sure, there is the possibility of placing traffic lights, but that just adds to the construction also.

With the Kit Kat Variety store and Petro Canada gas station already located on the same intersection, it means the area is already busy.

Another point I would like to get across is that we have several business that we can already support within Stouffville.

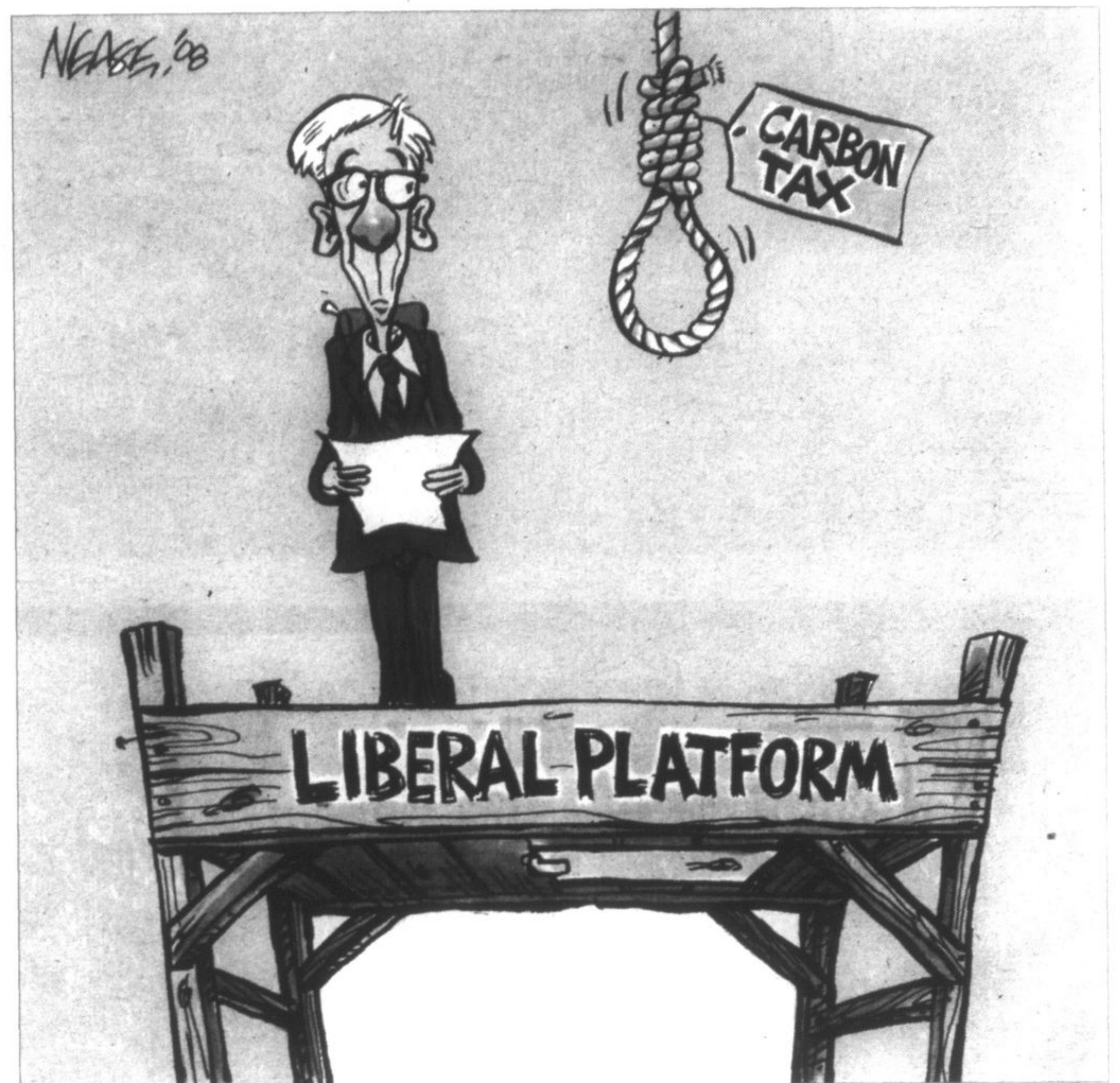
Rather than building new facilities and taking up precious land, people can buy products from the existing stores.

There are so many unique stores downtown, it isn't necessary to open anymore new buildings.

If a change can be made in preventing development within Stouffville, things will end up working out for the best. People will notice the land is much more valuable over constructed buildings in the long run.

Stouffville is our town. How do you want it to end up?

HARLEY JOHNSON
STOUFFVILLE



Can't see the forest for the trees

How much is a forest worth? And how do we calculate that value? Do we simply count the trees and figure out how much we could get for them if we were to cut them down and turn them into logs, lumber and pulp and paper?

That's been the traditional approach, but it hasn't served us well. A forest is much more than the timber it holds.

A forest provides habitat for wildlife, recreational opportunities for hikers and hunters, a place for quiet contemplation and filtration and storage of drinking water.

And because forests scrub carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in their trees and soils, they are a critical "hedge" against global warming.

When we take into account all of the ecological benefits or services a forest provides, we have to reevaluate the way we make decisions about how we manage them.

Clear-cutting an old-growth forest may provide temporary jobs and profits, as well as two-by-fours

to build homes and furniture, but if it also results in the release of carbon stored in the trees and soil, thus contributing to global warming, or if it wipes out the habitat of an animal crucial to the natural order, then the short-term gains may not be worthwhile.

Two new reports illustrate the idea of taking into account the full suite of values that a forest represents or its "natural capital" when making decisions about resource management.

Dollars and Sense: The Economic Rationale to Protect the Spotted Owl Habitat in British Columbia and The Real Wealth of the Mackenzie Region: Assessing the Natural Capital Values of a Northern Boreal Ecosystem both argue for a more holistic approach to managing our natural ecosystems.

For a long time, we've only considered the immediate market value of resources when making forest-use decisions. In doing so, we've ignored the enormous value of the ecosystem services critical



David Suzuki

to biodiversity, human health and community well-being.

Although it's not easy to put a dollar value on things such as carbon sequestration and storage, water filtration, clean-water availability and species diversity, it's foolish to leave them out of the equation.

For Dollars and Sense, researchers looked not just at the value of timber in old-growth forests in B.C. inhabited by the endangered spotted owl, but also at the value of recreational uses, non-timber forest products and the role the forests play in storing carbon.

They concluded "in 72 of 81 scenarios, increased forest conservation yields better economic returns than does status quo logging and limited conservation".

The Mackenzie report concludes the non-market value of that region is 11 times greater than the market value.

The researchers estimate the market value, based on gross domestic product, is \$41.9 billion a year, while the non-market value, based on 17 ecosystem services, is \$483.8 billion.

The outcome in the Mackenzie region has been positive. Under the Northwest Territories Protected Area Strategy, a collaborative effort between the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories, First Nations, conservation groups, and industry, the federal government announced earlier this year it plans to protect 10.1 million hectares of northern boreal forest.

The goal is to create a culturally and ecologically representative network of protected areas, ensuring communities benefit from both

conservation and development. The areas will be protected from industrial development, including oil and gas exploration and diamond and uranium mining.

The spotted owl habitat hasn't fared as well. So far, the B.C. government has not announced any plans to increase levels of protection for these areas.

But it's not just about saving the spotted owl, as important as that is. It's about finding a balance and about ensuring we derive the greatest benefit for all from our forestlands.

Taking into account all the values of a forest doesn't mean an end to logging and mining; it just means finding better ways to manage all our activities in these ecosystems and it means putting a value on the very real services they provide.

If we don't address the serious problems of global warming and biodiversity loss, as well as issues such as access to clean air and water, we may well join the spotted owl on the endangered list.

LETTERS POLICY

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