

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Maybe job retraining should start in Conservative caucus

Two recent Ottawa decisions leave me wondering if the job retraining program should begin in the Conservative caucus.

First, a contract for 1,200 new army trucks is given to a St. Thomas firm which is having the trucks made in Texas.

This is the same firm that received a government grant of \$65,000,000 five years ago to build the plant, and which is currently laying off 350-plus workers in Canada.

Secondly, a \$3-billion contract to replace about 20 Beaver aircraft in military service, given to a U.S. firm and its Italian partner.

I understand they have improved on the old DeHaviland design. A B.C. firm that has similar capability was refused permission by Peter McKay to even put in a bid.

It all defies logic. My two calls to our local federal representative, MP Paul Calandra, have gone unanswered.

R. BLAKE TUFFORD
STOUFFVILLE

Do other seniors have trouble with snow plow leftovers?

I am wondering whether other seniors in Stouffville have the same problem as I do

HAVE YOUR SAY, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

► What do you think of these issues or others?
E-mail letters to the editor to jmason@yrmg.com

with snow clearing and the pile left by the snow plow.

It is now Feb. 3. I have not been able to move my car since Jan. 29, when I risked driving through it and got stuck.

Fortunately, a very nice young man driving an oil truck helped push me back into place, and there I have been ever since. Thank you to him.

I have called the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, but I have not had the courtesy of a reply.

Another senior on my street has given up and pays to have this snow removed. A third gets help from her neighbour when she's desperate.

I would be pleased to hear from anyone else with this problem. Maybe more united forces will get some action.

ANNA IVES
STOUFFVILLE



New president puts science in rightful place

Science has taken a beating over the past few years, especially in the U.S. and Canada.

We've put up with incessant braying from climate change deniers who, in the words of Guardian writer George Monbiot, "ignore an entire canon of science, the statements of the world's most eminent scientific institutions, and thousands of papers published in the foremost scientific journals" just so they can "pick up a crumb: a crumb which then disintegrates" in their palms.

George Bush's administration was so anti-science — blacklisting and purging scientists and suppressing or altering scientific studies — that 60 top scientists released a statement in 2004 accusing the administration of distorting scientific fact "for partisan political ends".

Science hasn't fared much better here in Canada.

A year ago, an editorial in the scientific journal Nature criticized our government for its skepticism about the science of global warming and for muzzling federal scientists

and closing the office of the national science adviser.

How refreshing it was, then, to listen to U.S. President Barack Obama's inaugural speech.

"We'll restore science to its rightful place, and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost," the president said. "We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories."

What's even more refreshing is President Obama is backing those words with action.

He has appointed top scientists to key positions, including Nobel Prize-winning physicist Steven Chu as energy secretary, leading marine biologist Jane Lubchenco to head up the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and Harvard physicist John Holdren as head of the White House Office of Science and Technology.

President Obama also understands the geopolitical ramifications of policies that help fuel climate change, as he made clear in his speech when he noted that "each day



David Suzuki

brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet".

It was refreshing also to hear the new president talk about choosing "hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord" and about "what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose and necessity to courage."

That common purpose and need for courage, as the president knows, extends beyond U.S. borders. After all, migratory Pacific salmon don't recognize the line between our

nations, nor do rivers such as the pristine Flathead, which flows from B.C. into Montana and forms the western boundary of Montana's Glacier National Park.

In British Columbia, most species at risk cross back and forth regularly between the two countries. We can't hope to protect them without strong and complementary habitat-protection policies in both countries.

We also need agreement on policies to protect the waters that flow between our two nations.

President Obama said during his campaign he opposes industrial development in the headwaters of the Flathead.

"The Flathead River and Glacier National Park are treasures that should be conserved for future generations," he said in reaction to a push by the B.C. government for development in the region, including an open-pit coal mine 40 km from the Canada-U.S. border.

Climate change is another issue that must be addressed quickly and effectively by both nations.

President Obama has proposed

an economy-wide cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Scientists and economists around the world know that putting a price on carbon emissions, through cap and trade and carbon taxes, is the best way to bring our emissions under control.

While Canadian provinces have joined with U.S. states to implement cap-and-trade programs, our federal government has yet to act.

It's great to see a U.S. administration that isn't afraid of real progress and change. But, as President Obama noted, it isn't just up to the American government to create that change; it's up to all of us.

And while he was referring to American citizens, Canadians must also confront the challenges that both our countries, and indeed, the entire world, face.

It's time to realize, when it comes to finding solutions to our common problems, science matters.

David Suzuki writes an occasional column for The Sun-Tribune.

LETTERS POLICY

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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