

Green Coalition urging City of Côte St. Luc to enact the Kyoto resolution

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Environmental activists are mounting the pressure on Côte St. Luc city council to pass a resolution stating its position with regards to the Kyoto Accord on greenhouse gas emissions.

Responding in February on whether Côte St. Luc plans to take a stand on the Kyoto issue, Mayor Anthony Housefather told Baily Road resident Avrom Shtern, a board member of Montreal's Green Coalition, that council wants to deal with the matter using more than just words.

Housefather said Côte St. Luc would like to promote programs that actively encourage ecologically sound habits by residents. But he questioned the merit of city council passing a Kyoto resolution, because it could be "essentially meaningless."

Last month, Housefather pointed out that Côte St. Luc will be expanding its recycling program to all residents this year, that it will also be starting a door-to-door composting project, and that three members of the eight-person council are known for their environmentally-positive views.

During city council's March 12 public meeting, Westlake Avenue resident Alex Davis, also a board member of the environmental group, reminded the mayor that he hadn't responded to a letter sent out nearly a year ago to Côte St. Luc and other municipalities across the country by the coalition, urging them to take a stand on Kyoto.

Last June during the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' annual conference in Montreal, the Green Coalition called on mayors and municipalities across Canada to support the Kyoto agreement and implement it in their jurisdiction, regardless of how the Conservative government

in Ottawa might choose to deal with the matter.

The coalition noted that elected municipal officials in the United States have signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, in which they agree with their country's emissions reduction target as set out in the Kyoto Accord.

"We urge municipalities to meet or exceed Kyoto Protocol targets for reducing global warming pollution," stated the resolution. According to Davis, the Green Coalition received replies from a large number of municipalities across Canada to which the letter had been sent. "As we know, global warming is an important thing and Kyoto is a milestone," he said.

Davis maintained that cities and towns have a valuable role to play in drawing the public's awareness to the issue. "If you have municipalities thinking in a way that is beyond the borders of municipalities, you have true leadership," he said.

Housefather, while agreeing that municipalities have an obligation "to go beyond our water pipes, to go beyond local parking issues," said he could not recall receiving

the coalition's letter. "In my view, Kyoto is not necessarily — although I'm not

against Kyoto — the be all and end all,"

he said.

Housefather cited evidence that the greenhouse gas emissions for Canada, which signed the Kyoto Accord, have risen more than those of the United States, which has not. Davis insisted that Côte St. Luc's failure to acknowledge the letter had negative implications. "There was a rejection," he said. The mayor vehemently denied this.