

**Climate Change Awareness Rally**

**Sunday November 29 – 12:45 P.M. – Civic Centre Steps**

**[AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY]**

Good afternoon, it's great to be joining you here today at City Hall.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the other dignitaries we have in attendance: Chief Lyle Sayers of Batchewana First Nation and Chief Paul Syrette of Garden River First Nation, the Honourable David Oraziatti and Kara Flannigan, our Green Party candidate in the recent federal election. Thank you all for participating today.

I'd also like to thank the organizers, Kevin Magill and Greg MacLachlan of White Pines Collegiate and Vocational School. I'm grateful to you for you having taken the initiative to make this event happen and also for inviting me to participate.

Finally, I want to offer some particular thanks to all the young people who have come out for today's event. It is great to see you involved and active and passionate about a cause that is so clearly important to you.

Addressing climate change and environmental issues are obviously issues for **our** time. However, I think we can also expect them to be issues for **all** time, so long as there are humans residing on this planet.

So bringing about positive change then will require both long-term and on-going work and commitment. It's a challenge that can't be done in a sprint, but neither should it be looked at like a marathon. It's more like a relay race, where the baton keeps getting passed forward from one generation to the next.

And it is encouraging to see that so many individuals in **your** generation are eager to step forward to begin doing your part. All of you, by virtue of being here today, exemplify this desire and I commend you for that.

At the City of Sault Ste. Marie, we've been working for many years now to make our corporation—and our community—greener and more environmentally friendly places.

Sault Ste. Marie’s status as a “renewable energy capital” is well-known. However, we have also undertaken a number of corporate projects to reduce the carbon footprint of City operations.

For instance, the “Idle Free Sault Ste. Marie” initiative has helped our Transit Services division save approximately forty thousand litres of fuel and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by one hundred tonnes each year.

Another project we have underway at the present time—that you have probably begun to notice—is the conversion of our streetlights to high-efficiency LED lighting.

Streetlights are a big consumer of electricity and also a major expense for the City. The switch to LED will reduce our energy consumption dramatically and also lead to long-term savings of more than one million dollars each year. Which I think goes to show, that there are many green initiatives that have benefits to both business and the environment.

In addition to major projects like these, the City’s Environmental Initiatives Coordinator, Madison Zuppa, and our Green Committee do on-going work to reduce our corporate carbon footprint.

These activities include: energy audits, lighting retrofits, heating and cooling efficiency upgrades, collecting data about waste management practices, and promoting public awareness.

Earlier this month, Madison and the Green Committee were recognized with an Environmental Award from the Sault Ste. Marie Chamber of Commerce for their efforts to make our city a greener place.

So we have made some excellent strides, though clearly there is still much work to be done. And at times, the scale of the challenges that still lie ahead will feel daunting. However, I like to say, that **progress is born from belief in its own possibility**. If all of us stand strong in our belief as individual citizens that progress is possible, there is no doubt in my mind that we can and ultimately will make it happen.

Thank you.