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## Peace and environment activists consolidate

by Laura Martins



**F**our thousand supporters joined environment and peace activists from Greenpeace and the Toronto Disarmament Network at Queen's Park Oct. 20 to demand action from the new provincial government.

Jay Palter, Greenpeace's Great Lakes campaigner and one of the organizers of the "No Time to Waste" rally said that government promises and rhetoric for a better environment are no longer good enough.

Palter called on Premier Bob Rae to follow through on his election promise of phasing out nuclear power in Ontario. He also urged the Rae government to cut funding for Ontario Hydro's \$240,000,000 plan to investigate 15 new sites for nuclear power plants.

At the Throne Speech on November 20, Rae will outline his government's long-term policies. At that time, Palter hopes to see Rae's government initiate a "Zero Discharge" policy.

Zero Discharge is a campaign by Greenpeace to end the use, production and disposal of toxic chemicals into the Great Lakes.

"We expect to see a time-table for banning chlorine use in the pulp and paper industry, the first step towards zero discharge," said Palter. If this government can't take that step, there is no reason to believe that they can take the much harder steps that lie ahead."

Rae conceded that his government is not going to "wave a wand" to solve Ontario's environmental problems.

Yet he told the crowd that he was committed to cleaning up the environment.

"We are going to reduce waste, we're going to cut down the amount of garbage that we produce as a society," said Rae.

Rae welcomed suggestions from the public and encouraged pressure from environmental groups to assist his government in reaching a plan to solve Ontario's environmental problems.

"We can't do what others have done — to dither and delay and pass it on to another government."

Ann Rowan of the Toronto Disarmament Network focused on the Persian Gulf crisis and stressed the need for the US and Canada to withdraw its troops from the Gulf.

"We should not be going to war over oil. We should be learning how to do without it," Rowan said.

Palter told *Excilibur* that he was very pleased with the turnout, but that he wouldn't be satisfied until the Rae government demonstrated the political will to fulfill its campaign promises concerning environmental issues.

"There is a month until the Throne Speech. If, after November 20, things are not in place, we are going to start putting more pressure on them," Palter said.

Elizabeth Pryer photo

No time to waste: 4,000 environment and peace activists marched on Queen's Park last Saturday. The demonstrators called on Bob Rae's government to live up to its election promises on giving us a better environment.