



A Weekly Column by Dean Hickey

# THE FINAL TAKE

AN UNVARNISHED LOOK AT THE MANY  
SOCIAL & POLITICAL ISSUES OF OUR TIME...



## THE DECLINE AND FALL OF A CANADIAN GREEN PARTY THAT NEVER WAS...

PUBLISHING A BOOK REVIEW is a pleasant and worthwhile task, as it allows me to share an intellectual debate brought about by the hard work and dedication shown by the author. Last week I looked at a volume penned by well-known journalist Kenneth McDonald, entitled ‘His Pride Our Fall: Recovering from the Trudeau revolution.’ It felt particularly worthwhile because McDonald was able to remind us of Pierre Elliott Trudeau’s radical vision for this country, setting out in detail the root causes of what would eventually become the most significant economic and social decline Canada has ever seen. I am, of course, referring to the disastrous decade of Liberal Party rule that took place between 2015 and 2025 under the direction of Pierre’s son and political heir, Justin. This week I decided to delve into a sort of tell-all memoir published late last year by Mark Leiren-Young. In addition to his being a Canadian author, playwright and filmmaker, he decided in 2019 to accept a starring role in a real-life political farce by choosing to become a campaign manager for the Green Party. His book entitled, “Greener Than Thou: Surviving the Toxic Sludge of Canadian Ecopolitics” is a personal reflection on all that he believes went wrong with the movement and its inner circle.

In one of my earlier columns I outlined the absolute futility of supporting any of Canada’s fringe parties within today’s political reality, as we’ve essentially evolved into a more tolerable two-party system. That was no more evident than in early 2025 when voters from coast-to-coast decided the New Democrats were nothing more than a relic of the Soviet era, and that only a handful of Green candidates deserved more than a few hundred votes.

One of those Greens with his head still above water was Kitchener Ontario’s Mike Morrice, an incumbent MP who was ultimately defeated by over 66% of the total number of ballots cast. That left Elizabeth May as the sole-surviving eco-warrior and purveyor of political fiction who still serves as the Green Party MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands, a post she has held onto since 2011.

Leiren-Young describes Ms May as the Green’s heart, soul, and supreme leader for life, and it’s easy to see why - however he pulls no punches in his assessment of her failure to understand the limitations of her Western-based fringe movement. “In 2024 ... Greens worldwide pleaded with U.S. Green leader ... Jill Stein to drop out of the race so that people who loved the planet could cast ballots for Kamala Harris and help defeat Donald Trump. “One of those worldwide Greens was Elizabeth May. “I asked a once high-powered Green, forgive the oxymoron, how that argument didn’t apply to Elizabeth, who was pulling support from the NDP and Liberal candidates who stood between Canadians and a Conservative government ... I got a shrug. “That person was convinced neither Elizabeth nor her ‘cult’ of Canadian Greens could spot a contradiction.”

Leiren-Young suggests anyone totally committed to environmental causes would have seen that as a pretty straightforward equation. “You line up behind the party with the best shot at defeating the guy saying drill, baby, drill. “But it turns out the Greens, who are supposed to be on the side of the angels, are just on the side of the Greens.”

It gets worse - and better, depending on your point of view: “Many books you read come with the proviso that all persons are fictional and any resemblance to anyone living or dead is purely coincidental. “My disclaimer is that the Green Party of Canada is purely fictional. “This became clear when Elizabeth took her first walk in the snow in 2019, announced her resignation, and neither of her party’s two sitting MPs stepped forward to replace her. “That sure seemed like a vote of non-confidence in Team Green. “Inexplicably, the party also took deputy leader Jo-Anne Roberts out of the running by declaring her interim leader. Next came an exhausting eight-ballot leadership race that vaguely resembled a high school environmental club’s version of The Hunger Games. “The winner, Annamie Paul, imploded within weeks, losing a by-election in Toronto Centre and leaving the Greens as the only federal party without its leader in Parliament.”

As one might expect, Elizabeth May is now back at the helm as sole leader of her fringe movement. While the so-called ‘party’ ratified a co-leadership model in February 2025, her co-leader at that time, Jonathan Pedneault, resigned shortly after the 2025 federal election.


As to that fellow Mike Morrice in the Ontario riding of Kitchener Centre, his prospect of recognition beyond the usual cabal of local eco-warriors and Marxist sympathizers appears doomed according to Leiren-Young, who reminds us that, “A new leadership race was announced in 2022. “Once again, there was a young Green MP serving in the House of Commons whom one might think the party would anoint. “I could have offered a free slice of Pizza-Pizza to anyone who could name the MP and rest assured, no one who wasn’t in his riding, or picking up a pay-cheque from the Green Party, would be able to collect.”

As it happens, during that leadership race, almost no-one threw their hat into the ring. In fact, party president and long-time Indigenous affairs critic Lorraine Rekmans resigned, declaring, “The dream is dead.” Her scathing three-page exit letter said, “It seems to me there is no vision for a better future ... but only an effort to look back and settle old scores, while the planet burns.”

As Leiren-Young recalls, just before the 2025 election, the party magically rewrote its rule book, deciding it needed a co-leader after all. Mike Morrice, was appointed. The hope was that co-leadership status would gain Mike some national coverage and help him hold his riding... neither of which happened. “The party finally installed Jonathan Pedneault as co-leader. He arrived just in time to not represent the party on the federal debate stage - the Greens were deemed irrelevant and not invited to participate. Jonathan resigned his co-leadership after finishing fifth in an unwinnable riding in Montreal.

There’s so much more detail in his book ‘Greener Than Thou: Surviving the Toxic Sludge of Canadian Ecopolitics’ that it makes me wish I had a full page for my column. For the time being, I’ll give the last word to the author himself as he helps put an end to any illusions regarding the Green Party’s future. “I needed to share my misadventures as a Green insider ... I’d taken notes, downloaded emails, texts, and memos, and, in honour of Jody Wilson-Raybould, the greatest leader the Green Party of Canada never had, recorded a few calls. Then, to make sure I was as accurate and fair as possible, I interviewed former party insiders who not only were insistent that the Greens were a cult, but that it was far more dysfunctional than I’d ever imagined.”

You would do well to heed his words come the next election. A vote is a terrible thing to waste.



# THE Mr. Files

## By John Mutton

CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

# Karmageddon

By Mr. ‘X’ ~ John Mutton  
CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

### Toronto Taxes, Trades, and Political Conviction

This week, Toronto’s tax-and-spend Mayor Olivia Chow proposed a 2.2 percent tax increase. Let me put a few things into perspective about Toronto taxes. Toronto homeowners do not pay anywhere near the level of property taxes that residents in the 905 do—largely because of repeated provincial bailouts over the years. That said, I do have to tip my hat to the Rob Ford years and especially the John Tory years, when tax increases were at least manageable and predictable. Now, everyone knows I am a fiscal conservative—not a socialist—but I also believe in giving credit where credit is due. Take, for example, what I consider one of the greatest trades in history, right up there with the Manhattans selling Manhattan Island for beads and trinkets, or when the New York Yankees picked up Babe Ruth from the Boston Red Sox. In my opinion, one of the greatest political trades ever pulled off was Mayor Chow successfully uploading the Don Valley Parkway’s asset replacement and ongoing maintenance costs to the Province of Ontario. These costs are absolutely enormous. Frankly, I was surprised this move didn’t receive far more pushback from other politicians, given that taxpayers across the rest of Ontario are now on the hook for infrastructure that was previously the responsibility of the City of Toronto. So what did the province get in return? Silence.

Silence on the Ontario Place mega-project—and quiet support from the City of Toronto. No project has meant more to the Premier than Ontario Place and its spa, and it clearly mattered enough that he was willing to assume all the costs of the Don Valley Parkway to secure that political peace. This was a massive win for Mayor Chow. In fact, I initially thought this deal might even result in a smaller tax increase for Toronto residents. Instead, much of the money saved from DVP asset replacement and maintenance appears to have been redirected into new social programsexactly as the mayor promised she would do.

To her credit, Mayor Chow was upfront about her intentions. She said she would expand social programs, and she said taxes would go up. She won the support of the electorate, and with strong-mayor powers, she now has the authority to implement her agenda.


While many fiscal conservatives like myself may strongly disagree with her priorities, I do respect the fact that she is doing exactly what she said she would do. Credibility and accountability matter. The real problem in politics isn’t ideological disagreement—it’s when politicians tell voters one thing and then do the opposite. We’ve seen this locally before. During the debate over the Durham-York Energy-from-Waste facility, then-Councillors Foster (now Mayor Foster) and Wu were vehemently opposed to the incinerator—until they were re-elected. After that, they supported incineration.

That is where trust breaks down.

The moral of the story is simple: I would rather have someone in public office— even if they’re not of the same political stripe as me—who stays true to their convictions and to the public, rather than someone who tells a bold-faced lie to get elected.

Now, with Trump-era tariffs once again impacting our economy, and growing pressure to double—or even triple—the size of the Durham incinerator, let’s hope we have politicians across Durham Region who actually stand by what they say.

Because convictions don’t mean much if they disappear the moment the votes are counted.



# Lisa Robinson

PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

## If Toronto Can Hold the Line, Why Can’t Pickering or Durham Region?

At a time when families are struggling to keep up with the cost of living, one question keeps coming up at the kitchen table: why are municipal taxes rising faster than inflation?

Toronto — Canada’s largest city, (our next door neighbour) - with aging infrastructure, enormous service demands, and a far more complex budget than most municipalities — has proposed a 2.2% tax increase, roughly in line with inflation. Yet here in Pickering, residents are being asked to absorb a 3.5% increase at the City level, with the Region of Durham proposing increases that could reach as high as 6.04%.

That disparity deserves scrutiny.

Inflation is often used as the justification for tax increases. When costs rise, governments argue, revenue must rise too. But if inflation is the benchmark, then why are some municipalities managing to stay close to it — while others far exceed it?

Pickering residents are not receiving income increases of 3.5% or 6%. Seniors on fixed incomes are not seeing their pensions adjusted to match these numbers. Young families are already stretched by mortgage payments, rent, groceries, fuel, and utilities. Every additional percentage point matters. The issue is not whether municipalities face financial pressure — they do. The issue is how those pressures are managed and who is expected to carry the burden. Toronto has made difficult choices. It has prioritized restraint, examined spending, and acknowledged that affordability is not an abstract concept — it is a daily reality for residents. If Toronto, with its scale and complexity, can hold a proposed increase to 2.2%, then smaller municipalities and regions must explain clearly why they cannot.

Too often, higher tax increases are treated as inevitable rather than as a last resort. Instead of asking, “How do we control costs?” the question becomes, “How much more can residents absorb?” That is the wrong starting point. Municipal government is closest to the people. It is where residents feel financial decisions most directly. That proximity comes with a responsibility to be disciplined, transparent, and honest about trade-offs. It also means being willing to say no — to expansions, to discretionary spending, and to growth plans that outpace infrastructure and affordability. When City and Regional increases are combined, the total tax impact on Pickering residents becomes significant. Residents don’t experience these increases in isolation; they experience them all at once. City, Region, school boards — it all comes from the same household budget. If inflation is the standard, then governments should be expected to justify every dollar above it. Not with slogans, not with generalities, but with clear explanations of what is driving costs and what alternatives were considered.

Affordability is not a talking point. It is the difference between staying in a home or selling it. Between managing and falling behind. Between trust in local government and growing frustration. If Toronto can aim for restraint, Pickering and Durham Region owe residents a clear answer to a simple question: why can’t we? Taxpayers deserve nothing less.