

Hundreds of protestors march against a proposed AI data centre in southern Cape Breton on the streets of Halifax, Saturday. Organizers said it was one of at least seven protests planned across the province that day. *(The Canadian Press)*

N.S. protests call for moratorium on AI data centre proposals

BY TORI FITZPATRICK

HALIFAX — The chants of nearly 1,000 Nova Scotians drowned out the rain in downtown Halifax Saturday as residents took to the streets to protest a proposed artificial intelligence data centre in southern Cape Breton.

Protesters gathered in front of the provincial legislature at noon, taking up an entire block of Hollis Street before marching through the city's downtown.

They called for a moratorium on all large-scale AI data centre proposals in the province after proponent Everwind Fuels announced last month it plans to lease a data centre in Pont Tupper, N.S., to U.S. AI company Anthropic.

Ned Zimmerman, a tech worker from Dartmouth, N.S., and one of the organizers of the rally, said large-scale AI data centres are socially destructive and environmentally irresponsible.

"We feel that the push to integrate AI into everything raises a lot of concerns for society, and this is not the kind of thing that we want to see being imposed on our communities, on our landscapes, our ecosystems, and our populations," Zimmerman said.

Organizers of the rally said it was one of seven happening across the province on Saturday.

Everwind has described the $10-billion project as the largest private investment in provincial history. Anthropic has signed a 20-year lease for the 18,600-square-metre facility, which it will use to power its AI assistant Claude.

It is expected to come online in 2027 and draw 95 megawatts of electricity in its first phase. A 325-megawatt expansion is scheduled for mid-2028, bringing the total energy demand to 420 megawatts.

But it has faced backlash from Nova Scotians who are concerned about its potential impact on the environment and on power rates.

A petition to stop the development of AI data centres in Nova Scotia on Change.org garnered nearly 28,000 signatures.

Everwind says it will cover the cost of all electricity infrastructure, and the project will not increase power rates for customers.

A statement from Premier Tim Houston's office said the data centre will only proceed if it meets provincial and federal guidelines, which it noted includes protecting the water, the environment, power rates and capacity.

Zimmerman said those guidelines are not enough for a project of this scale, adding that communication from the provincial government has been sparse. He also said Everwind has not done enough to consult with communities about the data centre, demonstrating a lack of transparency and accountability.

"It was kept closely under wraps. And broader community consent, community consultation was not engaged until the project was announced," he said.

Everwind did not respond to request for comment about the protest.

Earlier this week, the company held two lengthy information sessions in Cape Breton. Some attendees said they were left with outstanding questions. Everwind's engagement director said at a session Wednesday night that more consultations would be arranged.

Rebecca Lawrence from Dartmouth was among the protesters Saturday in Halifax. She said the provincial government is rushing the data centre project without acknowledging the potential harm it could cause.

She said she's worried about potential noise pollution and the centre's impact on the local water supply.

Water from nearby Landrie Lake, which is also used to supply water to the town of Port Hawkesbury, will be used to cool the Point Tupper data centre's servers. The system will use an average of 100,000 litres of water per day in the first phase, expanding to an average draw of 500,000 litres per day in its next phase.

"I think that one drop of drinking water wasted on generative AI is too much," Lawrence said.

EverWind said the cooling system will be closed-loop, similar to a car's radiator, with cooling fluid recycled or disposed of off-site, not in local waterways.

Ashley Drodge, another organizer of Saturday's protest in Halifax, said she's concerned about the lack of binding regulations for AI data centre development and the absence of an environmental impact assessment for the project.

"This is short-sighted, money in your pocket development," she said.

Earlier this month, Nova Scotia's Minister of Environment, Timothy Halman, said that instead of an environmental impact assessment, the project requires industrial approval, a tool he described as the most appropriate for this type of project.

"What is being utilized here is a very robust regulatory tool to ensure safe construction and operation of a proposed facility," he told reporters.

Houston has previously said he doesn't know whether any new legislation is needed to regulate the data centre.

However, the statement from his office about the protest said the province would be open to legislative changes "should we find ourselves in a situation where we require them."

Lawrence said Saturday her message to the premier is to listen to Nova Scotians.

"Nova Scotian's are pretty vocal on the fact that we don't want this," she said. "On every side there's people from all across the spectrum who are saying no to these data centres."

» The Canadian Press

Mayor disciplined for Palestine comments

BY MARIEKE GLORIEUX-STRYCKMAN

MONTREAL — The mayor of a Montreal-area suburb posted online comments about Palestine that were "violent in nature" and have no place in society, said the disciplinary committee of the Quebec order of professional accountants in a new ruling.

The disciplinary committee said it was ordering Hampstead Mayor Jeremy Levi to pay a $30,000 fine and undergo mandatory training, noting that his comments posted on social media in 2024 and 2025 undermined the reputation of the accounting profession.

The committee launched their investigation after receiving a complaint about more than 20 social media posts Levi had made about Palestine and pro-Palestinian activists. These included him speaking out against the recognition of a Palestinian state, and criticism of what he described as "terrorist sympathizers" or "the pro-Hamas mob."

The council also ordered him to pay additional costs to cover legal fees.

"The remarks made are negative and violent in nature," wrote the disciplinary council in its decision published Tuesday.

The council's ruling said that Levi had called for the extermination of civilians in Palestine and Iran, advocated for pre-emptive strikes on Iran and its allies, and labelled Palestinians and pro-Palestinian activists as terrorists.

The council also said the posts prompted strong responses online as well as media coverage, and that Levi's position as mayor heightened their visibility.

"Violent words of this nature, or acts akin to them — which, in the recent past, have been addressed, judged and prohibited — can have no place in modern society," wrote the disciplinary council.

The ruling also includes a letter Levi read to the disciplinary council on Oct. 26, expressing regret and suggesting that he made these comments as part of his responsibilities in public office.

"I recognize that these publications became a source of controversy and gave rise to concerns among members of the profession and the public … I am genuinely sorry for the concern and disruption that this matter has caused," he told the disciplinary council on Oct. 26.

Levi pleaded guilty to the ethics breach on Oct. 22, recognizing his posts "do not uphold the values of the profession, namely integrity, objectivity, credibility, and the obligation to refrain from any form of discrimination" and that they could harm public trust, according to the sanction document.

"Many residents looked to their elective representatives for support, reassurance and leadership, and my intention was to respond to the concerns of the community I was entrusted to serve," Levi told the committee.

The Town of Hampstead wouldn't comment on the sanction and Levi did not respond to a request for comment.

Some Hampstead residents had previously spoken out against their government in the summer of 2025 because the suburb was flying an Israeli flag outside its town hall.

The flag was set on fire in late August 2025. Montreal police arrested a suspect at the time and said its hate crimes unit was investigating.

» The Canadian Press

Trudeau joins Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government

BY SADEEN MOHSEN

Former prime minister Justin Trudeau has joined England's Oxford University in a new role.

Trudeau, 54, joined the Blavatnik School of Government as a distinguished fellow and member of the World Leaders Circle, the school said in a news release Friday.

The release says the former Liberal leader joins an international network of former heads of government, which includes former New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern and former U.K. prime minister Rishi Sunak.

From 2015 to 2025, Trudeau served as Canada's prime minister before stepping down.

The Blavatnik school, founded in 2010, says it is focused on public policy education and inspiring students to improve the "quality of government and public policy-making worldwide."

Trudeau says in the news release that he is looking forward to "contributing his experience" and working with other leaders to "consider how governments can respond to change and build a more hopeful, inclusive and prosperous future for everyone."

"In the decade that I was prime minister, the world went through profound change both geopolitically and technologically, which fundamentally reshaped our world," Trudeau said.

Blavatnik School dean Ngaire Woods said Trudeau brings "a wealth of experience, forged through a decade of public service" which will be beneficial to students.

"Our students are the public leaders of tomorrow, and the opportunity to learn directly from those who have navigated the complexities of government … is invaluable," Woods said in the release.

Trudeau is expected to visit the school later this month.

» The Canadian Press

1 person dead as storms lash B.C.

SURREY — One person is dead after two vehicles became trapped under a fallen tree in Surrey, B.C. during the second in a series of storms that brought howling winds and torrential rainfall to parts of the province Saturday night into Sunday morning.

The Surrey Police Service said in a statement that officers received a report Saturday evening of downed wires and a fallen tree across Highway 10, west of 184 Street.

Police said two vehicles were trapped under the tree and one of the drivers was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver of the other vehicle was treated for minor injuries.

City of Surrey and BC Hydro crews worked through the night to remove the downed power lines.

BC Hydro said the storm knocked out power for thousands of customers across the province. At the height of the storm, approximately 135,000 customers were without power early Sunday morning, it said.

That number dropped to about 63,000 customers as of 7 a.m. as crews worked to restore power, it said.

Environment Canada issued a rainfall warning around 10:30 a.m. Sunday for the Fraser Canyon between Boston Bar and Lytton, with rainfall amounts of up to 50 millimetres. Rainfall warnings have been lifted for northern and western Vancouver Island.

A wind warning is in place for north central B.C., with wind gusts reaching up to 90km/h until early Sunday evening. Wind warnings were also in effect early Sunday for parts of the Lower Mainland, the Sunshine Coast and Vancouver Island.

"It was just howling, and we had thunder, we had lightning," said Gerry Sullivan, a resident of the Village of Zeballos on northwest Vancouver Island, who noted the wind woke him up early Sunday.

"We're right on the west coast on an inlet to the Pacific. When it blows, it just howls right down this inlet."

An evacuation order remains in place for 22 properties in the village after heavy rain and flooding from a storm Friday raised the landslide risk.

The Strathcona Regional District said in a statement on Saturday that a geotechnical engineer had completed their initial assessment and the district was awaiting the formal report.

Sullivan and his wife Vicki said they have been without power since Saturday afternoon, but they have two generators to keep the lights on and a wood stove for backup heat.

"I'm 72-years-old and I've never ever experienced a wind like that," Vicki Sullivan said, adding that she could hear trees falling outside their home Saturday.

One of the main roads in the area, Maquinna Avenue, was re-opened to essential travel, but the regional district's statement said stopping was strictly prohibited, "as there continues to be a risk to public safety."

Gerry Sullivan said the village of about 120 residents is located about 42 kilometres away from the main highway along a forest service road. He said he's not sure whether the road is passable after the most recent storm.

At about 8 a.m. Sunday morning, he said the wind had died down but it was still raining in Zeballos.

More rain is on the way for parts of B.C., as its coastal areas are drenched by a series of atmospheric river systems.

B.C.'s River Forecast Centre said a third storm starting later Monday may bring in a more prolonged period of rainfall across the province's coast through next week.

» The Canadian Press

Woman killed when e-scooter and bus collide

VANCOUVER — Police said a woman on an e-scooter died following a collision with a transit bus in downtown Vancouver.

A release from Vancouver Police said the crash happened early Saturday when a man and a woman were riding an e-scooter on Seymour Street and entered the intersection at West Pender Street.

Police said neither the man nor the woman was wearing a helmet.

The woman died at the scene.

Police didn't say whether the man suffered any injuries.

Police said investigators are working to determine the circumstances of the collision, and they are asking witnesses to contact them.

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