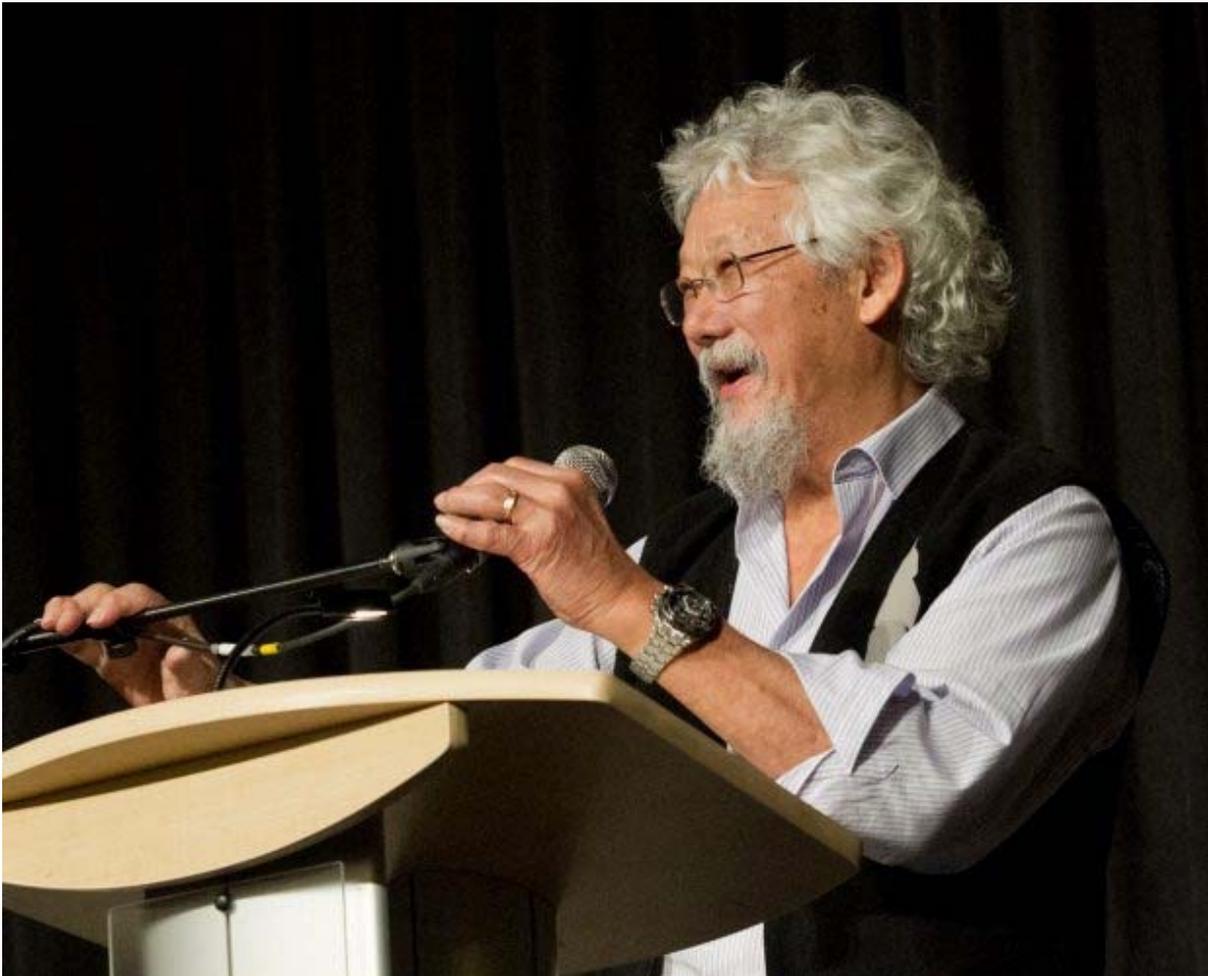


# Mr. Floatie shut out of Green Party rally

BY CINDY E. HARNETT, TIMESCOLONIST.COM NOVEMBER 20, 2012



David Suzuki speaks at a Green Party rally for candidate Donald Galloway at the Victoria Conference Centre on Monday.

**Photograph by:** Darren Stone, timescolonist.com

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CINDY E. HARNETT

The infamous Mr. Floatie's first public appearance in about four years at a Green Party rally Monday night was thwarted when the man in the feces costume said he was shown the door.

The rally, attended by about 1,300 people at the Victoria Conference Centre Monday night, was an appeal by Green Party leader Elizabeth May and others for Victoria voters to elect their candidate Donald Galloway in a byelection Nov. 26. The byelection is being held to replace retired Victoria NDP MP Denise Savoie.

The rally focused on what the Greens say is a pressing environmental crisis and a crumbling democratic process under the Harper government. Scientist David Suzuki was the keynote speaker.

Mr. Floatie, who didn't have a ticket to the event and stood in the foyer until he said he was asked to move outside, says Suzuki is an idol of his. However, he wishes Galloway would reconsider his election platform, which opposes the proposed \$783-million secondary sewage treatment plant in Esquimalt in favour of waiting and researching better options.

"If not now, when?" asked Mr. Floatie. "We have the money. We have a plan. It may not be the perfect plan and if the Green Party thinks it's a bad plan they should be suggesting improvements to the plan — not just saying this plan isn't workable or sustainable."

Mr. Floatie, also known as local teacher James Skwarok, said his appearance was good-humoured and that he took several photographs with tourists and passersby. He said he talked to many Green Party attendees who agreed with his "rebuttal."

Six years ago the infamous costumed character focused local, national, and international media attention on the issue of Victoria's lack of secondary sewage treatment.

Mr. Floatie was welcomed by many left-of-centre politicians back then but since the byelection kicked off the tides have changed and the anti-secondary sewage faction's opposition to the proposed plant in Esquimalt has gained momentum.

For that reason, Mr. Floatie made a comeback Monday night.

"I wasn't there to make a big stink, I was there to make a point that we shouldn't wait and that household and other toxic substances in our sewage will only accumulate over time in marine sediments and marine organisms. I don't think we should wait until it's too late," Mr. Floatie said.

Green Party campaign manager Jonathan Dickie said Mr. Floatie was asked to leave by Victoria Conference Centre security because "he appeared kind of strange, I guess. It's not every day you have a giant poo show up at an event."

Back in the day the Greens and the big turd would have been on the same page but Dickie concedes they have differences now.

"In the end we all want our sewage treated — this just isn't a plan that works right now. It's a lot of money we're talking about," Dickie said.

"We'll come up with a better plan but we don't need to rush into it," Dickie said.

Victoria byelection Liberal candidate Paul Summerville's platform is based on the stance that the proposed plant is a waste of tax dollars since ocean currents naturally deal with the screened sewage that is sent into the sea.

Galloway and Conservative candidate Dale Gann generally agree secondary treatment is needed but that the current plan is not the right one and a sober second review of options is needed.

The NDP are on the side of Mr. Floatie. NDP candidate Murray Rankin maintains we must obey a 2006 provincial order to further treat sewage entering the ocean and that we should take advantage of committed provincial and federal funding to build it by 2018.

Regional politicians will debate a vote to delay Greater Victoria's sewage treatment project at a meeting set for Nov. 27.

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