



HEARING COMMITTEE AGENDA

Hearing Committee Meeting
Wednesday, August 14, 2019
Tom Davies Square - Council Chamber

COUNCILLOR MARK SIGNORETTI, CHAIR

Bill Leduc, Vice-Chair

1:00 p.m. HEARING COMMITTEE MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBER

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DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Report dated July 17, 2019 from the General Manager of Corporate Services regarding Cancellation, Reduction or Refund of Taxes under Sections 357 and 358 of the Municipal Act, 2001. **3 - 11**
(RESOLUTION PREPARED)
(This report provides for tax adjustments under Sections 357 and 358 of the Municipal Act, 2001 for properties eligible for cancellation, reduction or refund of realty taxes.)
2. Report dated July 24, 2019 from the General Manager of Corporate Services regarding Building Renovator Licence Revocation - ACR 849407. **12 - 76**
(RESOLUTION PREPARED)
(This report deals with an application for appeal of a Business Licence resulting from the revocation of a Building Renovator Licence for EcoLife Home Improvements Inc.)

MEMBERS' MOTIONS

ADDENDUM

CIVIC PETITIONS

QUESTION PERIOD

ADJOURNMENT

Request for Decision

Cancellation, Reduction or Refund of Taxes under Sections 357 and 358 of the Municipal Act, 2001

Presented To:	Hearing Committee
Presented:	Wednesday, Aug 14, 2019
Report Date	Wednesday, Jul 17, 2019
Type:	Public Hearings

Resolution

THAT taxes totaling approximately \$16,568.08 be adjusted under Section 357 and 358 of the Municipal Act, 2001, of which the City's (municipal) portion is estimated to be \$12,335.21, as outlined in the report entitled "Cancellation, Reduction or Refund of Taxes under Section 357 and 358 of the Municipal Act, 2001" from the General Manager of Corporate Services, presented at the Hearing Committee meeting on August 14, 2019;

AND THAT the associated interest be cancelled in proportion to the tax adjustments;

AND THAT the Manger of Taxation be directed to adjust the Collector's Roll accordingly;

AND THAT staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan / Health Impact Assessment

This report refers to operational matters.

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to authorize the Manager of Taxation to adjust the Collector's Roll under Section 357 and 358 of the Municipal Act, 2001, which authorizes the cancellation, reduction and/or refund of property taxes under certain circumstances.

Financial Implications

Of the total taxes to be struck from the tax roll, the City's portion is estimated to be \$12,335.21 and the adjustment will be recorded in the 2019 financial records.

Signed By

Report Prepared By

Kyla Bell
Manager of Taxation
Digitally Signed Jul 17, 19

Division Review

Ed Stankiewicz
Executive Director of Finance, Assets and Fleet
Digitally Signed Jul 23, 19

Financial Implications

Liisa Lenz
Coordinator of Budgets
Digitally Signed Jul 23, 19

Recommended by the Department

Kevin Fowke
General Manager of Corporate Services
Digitally Signed Jul 23, 19

Recommended by the C.A.O.

Ed Archer
Chief Administrative Officer
Digitally Signed Jul 23, 19

Figure 1 - Tax Adjustments by Levy Body Tax Adjustments
Under Section 357/358 of the Municipal Act, 2001

City (Municipal Portion)	\$12,335.21
Education	\$4,232.87
Total	\$16,568.08

Background

Sections 357 and 358 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, provide the authority for the cancellation, reduction or refund of property taxes under certain circumstances. In The *Municipal Act, 2001*, provides for Council to hold a hearing at which applicants can make submissions regarding their applications. In accordance with the mandate of the Hearing Committee, this matter is before the Committee to hear any concerned applicants and to consider the recommendations arising out of the applications identified in this report.

Section 357:

Subsection 357(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* (the “Act”) identifies permitted grounds for an application for cancellation, reduction or refund of taxes as set out below:

Upon application to the treasurer of a local municipality made in accordance with this section, the local municipality may cancel, reduce or refund all or part of taxes levied on land in the year in respect of which the application is made if,

- (a) as a result of a change event, as defined in clause (a) of the definition of “change event” in subsection 34(2.2) of the Assessment Act, during the taxation year, the property or portion of the property is eligible to be reclassified in a different class of real property, as defined in regulations made under that Act, and that class has a lower tax ratio for the taxation year than the class the property or portion of the property is in before the change event, and no supplementary assessment is made in respect of the change event under subsection 34(2) of the Assessment Act;*
- (b) the land has become vacant land or excess land during the year or during the preceding year after the return of the assessment roll for the preceding year;*
- (c) the land has become exempt from taxation during the year or during the preceding year after the return of the assessment roll for the preceding year;*
- (d) during the year or during the preceding year after the return of the assessment roll, a building on the land,*
 - (i) was razed by fire, demolition or otherwise, or*
 - (ii) was damaged by fire, demolition or otherwise so as to render it substantially unusable for the purposes for which it was used immediately prior to the damage;*
- (d.1) the applicant is unable to pay taxes because of sickness or extreme poverty;*
- (e) a mobile unit on the land was removed during the year or during the preceding year after the return of the assessment roll for the preceding year;*
- (f) a person was overcharged due to a gross or manifest error that is clerical or factual in nature, including the transposition of figures, a typographical error or similar error but not an error in judgment in assessing the property; or*

(g) repairs or renovations to the land prevented the normal use of the land for a period of at least three months during the year.

The time line for filing an application for cancellation, reduction or refund of taxes is found in Subsection 357(3) of the Act as set out below:

An application under this section must be filed with the treasurer on or before the last day of February of the year following the year in respect of which the application is made.

Section 358:

Subsection 358 (1) the Act also provides for applications for cancellation, reduction or refund of taxes. Applicants under this section can apply for relief for a longer timeframe but face more restricted grounds, as set out below:

Upon application to the treasurer of a local municipality made in accordance with this section, the local municipality may cancel, reduce or refund all or part of the taxes levied on land,

- (a) in one or both of the two years preceding the year in which the application is made for any overcharge caused by a gross or manifest error in the preparation of the assessment roll that is clerical or factual in nature, including the transposition of figures, a typographical error or similar errors, but not an error in judgment in assessing the property; or*
- (b) in the year or years in respect of which an assessment is made under section 33 or 34 of the Assessment Act for any overcharge caused by a gross or manifest error in the preparation of the assessment that is clerical or factual in nature, including the transposition of figures, a typographical error or similar errors, but not an error in judgment in assessing the property.*

Pursuant to Section 358 subsection (3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*:

An application in respect of an error in the preparation of the assessment roll must be filed with the treasurer between March 1 and December 31 of a year and may apply to taxes levied for one or both of the two years preceding the year in which the application is made and the application shall indicate to which year or years it applies.

Options/Discussion:

The City forwards all applications for tax relief under Section 357 and Section 358 of the Act to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) for consideration. MPAC conducts an internal review based on the information contained in the application against their records and recommends any necessary assessment and/or tax class

changes. MPAC then issues a Response Form to the City and where applicable, makes a recommendation for a change to the assessment and/or tax class on the tax roll. This revised assessment and/or tax class provided by MPAC is what the City relies on to adjust the taxes.

In some instances, MPAC may determine that the application does not reveal any grounds to reduce assessment and/or change tax class. MPAC would provide a Response Form to the City with a notation of “No Recommendation” for these applications. Examples for MPAC to issue a “No Recommendation” may be that the assessment was already altered through some other mechanism such as a Request for Reconsideration, the situation described in the application was not significant enough to change the assessment, or it may be determined that there was no assessment relating to the change included in the roll returned roll (building was not assessed or was fully depreciated). If the assessment is unchanged, the properties identified in these applications are not eligible for a tax adjustment or reduction.

Upon the return of the Response Forms from MPAC, they are reviewed by staff and in accordance with the Act the property owners are notified of the recommendation and advised of their options to respond. Property owners have the right to appeal to Council, through the Hearing Committee process.

Of the applications included in the attachments for this report, MPAC advised there was ‘No Recommendation’ on 6 applications and as a result, no tax relief is being proposed. These applications are identified in Appendix ‘C’ and the reason for the ‘No Recommendation’ is included for your information. There is no tax adjustment to be made in these instances.

Of the applications on which MPAC did make recommendations, 15 applications were under Section 357 of the Act for relief of taxes. The chart contained in Appendix ‘B’ lists these showing the reason for and the estimated amount of the tax adjustment.

The main reason(s) for these applications was:

- Fire / Demolished - relating to the demolition or damage due to fire of a building on the property that reduced the assessed value;
- Became Exempt - representing a property that was assessed on the assessment roll as taxable, but became exempt during the year. This property was either transferred during the year from a taxable owner to the City or another non-taxable owner or tenant such as a school board, hospital or it become a place of worship;
- Class Change - a change event occurred that made the property or a portion of the property eligible to be reclassified in a different class that has a lower tax ratio/tax rate;

The remaining applications are for relief under Section 358 of the Act for:

- Gross or Manifest Error – an overcharge of taxes due to errors by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) on the assessment roll that is clerical or factual in nature.

Appendix 'B' details the estimated tax changes resulting from these recommendations.

Appendix 'A' to this report sets out a breakdown of estimated total tax reductions by Municipal, Education and Business Improvement Area portions by of category of permitted reasons for the cancellation, reduction and refund.

The property owners were advised of the recommendations or no recommendations in writing on or before June 14, 2019. Staff were able to respond to all questions or concerns raised by the affected property owners. Applicants are encouraged to notify staff if they wish an opportunity to appear before the Hearing Committee to challenge the recommendations of this report. While no such requests were received, any of the applicants are entitled to attend before the Committee to make representations regarding their application.

Summary:

The Committee is asked to recommend that Council approve the tax cancellations, reductions and refunds as shown for the rolls as set out on Appendix 'B' and summarized in Appendix 'A'.

Appendix 'A'
Tax Adjustments Report Total
Report Date: August 14, 2019

<i>Reason for Adjustment</i>	<i>Municipal Portion</i>	<i>Education Portion</i>
Fire or Demolition	\$ 3,436.04	\$ 453.44
Class Change	\$ 1,006.46	\$ 612.24
Exempt	\$ 7,892.71	\$ 3,167.19
TOTAL:	\$ 12,335.21	\$ 4,232.87

Appendix 'B'
Tax Adjustments Detailed Listing
Report Date: August 14, 2019

Tax Appeals: Section 357 - Residential			
Tax Year	Roll Number	Reason	Total Amount
2019	010.008.12300	Class Change	\$ (144.53)
2019	010.011.03000	Demolition	\$ 516.55
2019	020.013.15055	Demolition	\$ 1,255.44
2019	020.019.09301	Class Change	\$ (654.56)
2019	050.026.00100	Demolition	\$ 28.91
2019	150.002.12900	Demolition	\$ 51.24
2019	160.003.21500	Demolition	\$ 342.71
2019	160.008.01300	Demolition	\$ 117.22
2019	160.015.24701	Demolition	\$ 1,577.41
2019	170.025.07169	Became Exempt	\$ 81.25
2019	210.015.06249	Became Exempt	\$ 65.93
2019	210.015.06250	Became Exempt	\$ 65.93
Total		12 Applications	\$ 3,303.50
Tax Appeals: Section 357 - Non-Residential			
2019	010.008.12300	Class Change	\$ 351.18
2019	020.019.09301	Class Change	\$ 2,066.61
2019	070.001.00800	Became Exempt	\$ 10,846.79
Total		3 Applications	\$ 13,264.58
Total			
TOTAL		15 Applications	\$ 16,568.08

Appendix 'C'
No Recommendation Changes
Report Date: August 14, 2019

Tax Year	Roll Number	Reason for Recommendation
2019	010.012.03800	MPAC is unable to assess the deficiencies with the property at this time as there is no estimate of the cost to cure available. Property is currently listed for sale at a higher asking price then the assessed value.
2019	010.016.18000	Structure remains on property
2019	050.038.15286	No assessed value on above ground pool and deck that were removed
2019	110.002.41600	100% obsolescence applied to CVA
2019	230.001.21101	No change in tax class
2019	230.001.21102	No change in tax class

Request for Decision

Building Renovator Licence Revocation - ACR 849407

Presented To:	Hearing Committee
Presented:	Wednesday, Aug 14, 2019
Report Date	Wednesday, Jul 24, 2019
Type:	Public Hearings

Resolution

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury upholds the revocation and refusal to issue the Business Licence for a Building Renovator to EcoLife Home Improvements Inc, David MURRAY, owner of Ecolife Home Improvements Inc, City of Greater Sudbury, as outlined in the report entitled "Building Renovator Licence Revocation - ACR 849407" from the General Manager of Corporate Services, presented at the Hearing Committee meeting on August 14, 2019.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan / Health Impact Assessment

This report refers to operational matters.

Report Summary

The City of Greater Sudbury Business Licensing By-Law 2004-350, as amended, became effective January 01, 2005 and regulated the licensing and governing of businesses. Part IV of the By-Law Building Trades, requires all building contractors performing or soliciting alterations, repairing or renovating building or structures to obtain an annual Building Renovator business licence with the municipality.

In receipt of numerous complaints about the services of a Building Renovator acting on behalf of a business called EcoLife Home Improvement Inc, it was reported that business was not being carried out in accordance with the law or with honesty and integrity. In accordance with authorities in the Business Licensing Bylaw, the City of Greater Sudbury refused to renew the 2019 Building Renovator Licence.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Signed By

Report Prepared By

Melissa Laalo
By-law Coordinator - Animal Care and Control
Digitally Signed Jul 24, 19

Financial Implications

Liisa Lenz
Coordinator of Budgets
Digitally Signed Jul 24, 19

Recommended by the Department

Kevin Fowke
General Manager of Corporate Services
Digitally Signed Jul 25, 19

Recommended by the C.A.O.

Ed Archer
Chief Administrative Officer
Digitally Signed Jul 25, 19

Background

The City of Greater Sudbury Business Licensing By-Law 2004-350, as amended, became effective January 01, 2005. The primary purpose of business licensing is to ensure that businesses follow the City's municipal land use regulations, building, fire, and other community safety requirements. Business Licensing is a way for the City to provide consumer protection and maintain a safe environment for the general public through inspections.

In the event a business is operating contrary to the provisions of the Business Licensing By-Law, the Licence Issuer may suspend, revoke or refuse to issue any licence. Part IV of the By-Law, Building Trades, requires all building contractors performing or soliciting alterations, repairing or renovating building or structures to obtain an annual Building Renovator business licence with the municipality.

The grounds for revoking a licence are pursuant to Part II, section (24) (e) of By-Law 2004-350;

(e) The Issuer of Licences, or, where there is a referral to Council, the Council, may suspend, revoke or refuse to issue any licence that may be issued under the provisions of any part of this By-Law, if, in the case of a corporate applicant or licensee, the conduct of its officers, directors, employees or agents affords reasonable grounds for belief that the business will not be carried on in accordance with the law or with honesty and integrity.

Part II, sections 24, 25, 26, 27 of the By-Law provides for specifics to refer the matter to Council for its consideration. Where there is a referral to the Hearing Committee, it shall hold a meeting for the purpose of directing the Issuer of Licences whether to issue the licence. As per section 25, the Issuer of Licences is not only required to give notice to the affected business owner but to all persons or agencies that appear to have an interest in the revocation of the business licence.

According to Part II, section 27, the Hearing Committee, upon written request of an applicant, shall afford the affected business owner an opportunity at the meeting to make submissions in respect of the matter. A letter of Appeal was received by the appellant on April 11, 2019 and it is attached to this report.

The Hearing committee is also required to provide affected person or agencies the same opportunity to make submissions in respect to the revocation of the business licence. After due consideration to the submissions is made, the Hearing Committee, by resolution, shall direct the Licence Issuer as to their decision.

Facts Supporting the Licence Revocation

EcoLife Home Improvements Inc., owner David MURRAY, had been licenced with the City of Greater Sudbury as a Building Renovator discontinuously (with lapses) since April 13, 2016 up until December 31, 2018. City staff have had numerous interactions with Mr. MURRAY to encourage/remind for the renewal of the required Building Renovator licence in a timely manner. It has been documented that the appellant has been difficult with staff during these interactions and issues with behavior have been escalated to management. Management was previously able to correct issues with lateness and professionalism in order to ensure compliance with the licensing by-law and allow Mr. MURRAY to retain the Building Renovator licence up until December 31, 2018

On December 21, 2018 the By-Law and Licensing office received the first of several complaints that the services offered by David MURRAY, owner of EcoLife Home Improvements Inc, were not being carried out in accordance with the law or with honesty and integrity. As a result, following an investigation, the City of Greater Sudbury Licensing Issuer revoked the Building Renovator licence for EcoLife Home Improvements Inc. The notice was sent by registered mail on March 28, 2019 where it sat unclaimed at a Canada Post office. A copy of the notice was hand delivered April 09, 2019 to Mr. MURRAY at 850 Notre Dame Avenue, Sudbury. Copies of the business licensing revocation letter are attached to this report and details of the events that occurred while delivering of the letter are explained in the ACR 849407 case comments.

On March 07, 2019 individuals who claim to have been affected negatively by Mr. MURRAY's business operations held a protest near Tom Davies Square, Greater Sudbury.

Since the decision to revoke Mr. MURRAY's licence by the Issuer of Licences was officially declared on March 28, 2019, the By-Law and Licensing Section has received several more complaints as to the integrity of the business operations of Mr. MURRAY.

In addition to the complaints received in the By-Law and Licensing section, the City of Greater Sudbury's Building Services has been dealing with complaints from the public regarding the operations of EcoLife Home Improvements Inc related to performing renovation and construction work without the required building permits. The Manager of Building Inspection Services, Andre GUILLOT, is in support of the revocation of the Building Renovator's licence for EcoLife Home Improvements Inc.

In consultation with Greater Sudbury Police Service (GSPS), Detective Constable Andy WILLIAMS, has recommended that the City of Greater Sudbury does not issue a business licence to Mr. MURRAY and further confirmed several complaints and an ongoing criminal investigation into the allegations.

In addition, it was brought to the attention of the Issuer of Licences that EcoLife Home Improvements Inc is registered with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services as a contractor defined and listed on their Consumer Beware List. The Consumer Beware List is a searchable public record and the Ministry maintains this list of businesses that have either:

- not responded to the ministry after they were sent 2 notifications about a consumer complaint. If the business does not take action after the second notification, it is added to the list
- been charged or convicted in relation to the [Consumer Protection Act](#) or [other acts of the ministry](#)

Attached is the report from the public website of the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services showing Mr. MURRAY, owner of EcoLife, was charged and convicted in 2016 of offences related to the *Consumer Protection Act, 2002*.

Mr. MURRAY has since closed his store front at 850 Notre Dame Avenue, Sudbury, and posted on the door is a notice dated April 24, 2019 from the Ontario Bailiff and Lien Registration Corp. regarding non-payment of rent.

Mr. MURRAY was also arrested and charged criminally on April 23, 2019. The criminal charges levied against MURRAY were not in relation to any of his business clients. However, as GSPS spokesperson Kaitlyn DUNN confirmed in the Sudbury.com Northern Life article, that MURRAY was charged with theft under \$5,000 and trafficking stolen property. The article is attached to this report. Where the Business Licensing By-law requires Building Renovators to provide a criminal record check, this offence and potential conviction would negatively impact any future licenses by the appellant.

At this time there are eleven (11) complaints filed with the Licence Issuer related to the conduct of Mr. MURRAY pertaining to his business dealings. Due to the ongoing criminal investigation and civil litigation the Licence Issuer has chosen not to include the submissions of the complainants in this report. Below is a list and summary of the documents submitted by complainant. However, all of the complainants were invited to attend this meeting and can speak to their complaints.

Timeline of Complaints received by the City of Greater Sudbury By-Law Services regarding EcoLife Home Improvements Inc.;

Complaint 1 - December 21, 2018

ACR 849407 - complainant [REDACTED]

Submissions include: email correspondence between the complainant and EcoLife, copies of cheque for a deposit written to EcoLife, text message logs, letter from the complainant requesting deposit returned during a 'Cooling-Off Period'

Complaint 2 – March 11, 2019

ACR 849407 – complainant [REDACTED]

Submissions include: letter correspondence from the complainant to EcoLife, copy of Consumer Complaint made to the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, letter from the Ministry to EcoLife, copy of quote from EcoLife

Complaint 3 – March 13, 2019

ACR 849407 – complainant [REDACTED]

Submissions include: email correspondence and complaint information

Complaint 4 – March 14, 2019

ACR 849407 – complainant [REDACTED]

Submissions include: email correspondence and complaint information

Complaint 5 – March 14, 2019

ACR 849407 – complainant [REDACTED]

Submissions include: email correspondence, small claims reports, Ontario Ministry of Consumer Services – Consumer Protection Branch reports and witness statements, pictures of construction and renovation work, legal correspondence from the complaint's lawyer to EcoLife, copies of siding and roofing quote, copies of correspondence between the complainant and EcoLife,

Complaint 6 – March 20, 2019

ACR 849407 – complainant [REDACTED]

Submissions include: email correspondence, receipts for building materials shipped to David MURRAY, copy of quote for renovation from EcoLife, copy of contract between the complainant and Ecolife, bank withdrawal stubs from the complainant, Building

Services Inspection Notice, text message logs, Facebook posts and private messages, EcoLife information compiled by the complainant.

Complaint 7 – April 28, 2019

ACR 849407 – complainants [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
Submissions include: letter of complaint

Complaint 8 – April 29, 2019

ACR 849407 – complainant [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
Submissions include: statements made to By-Law Enforcement Officer SAGLE on April 29, 2019 contained in ACR comments.

Complaint 9 – May 01, 2019

ACR 849407 – complainant [REDACTED]
Submissions include: letter of complaint, correspondence from the complainant to EcoLife, copies of cheques, Superior Court of Justice court papers, statements, copy of the Order of the Court from February 2019

Complaint 10 – May 07 2019

ACR 849407 – complainant [REDACTED]
Submissions include: letter of complaint, statements from the complainant, copy of contract, text message logs, copy of bank drafts to EcoLife, copy of quote, bank loan paperwork

Complaint 11 – May 13, 2019

ACR 849407 – complainant [REDACTED]
Submissions include: letter of complaint

Conclusion

The Licence Issuer is confident that the revocation of the Building Renovator licence from Mr. David MURRAY, owner of EcoLife Home Improvements Inc., satisfies the requirements of By-Law 2004-350, Part II, section (24) (e) whereas there is reasonable grounds for belief that the business will not be carried on in accordance with the law or with honesty and integrity. The purpose of the denial is to mitigate the recurrence of similar incidents and provide assurance for consumer protection for the general public. The Licence Issuer recommends that the revocation be upheld by the Hearing Committee.

Related News Articles

CTV News

March 08 2019 - 'Sudbury homeowners upset with contractor over unfinished work'
<https://northernontario.ctvnews.ca/mobile/sudbury-homeowners-upset-with-contractor-over-unfinished-work-1.4328429?cid=sm>

Sudbury Star

March 15, 2019 – 'Grievances aired over unfinished renos'

<https://www.thesudburystar.com/news/local-news/grievances-aired-regarding-local-contractor>

Sudbury.com – Northern Life

March 13, 2019 – Protesters say something must be done about local home improvement company

<https://www.sudbury.com/local-news/protesters-say-ecolife-has-scammed-sudburians-out-of-hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars-1320057>

April 26, 2019 – EcoLife owner charged for theft and trafficking stolen property

<https://www.sudbury.com/local-news/ecolife-owner-charged-for-theft-and-trafficking-stolen-property-1394721>

April 26, 2019 – 'They are trying to force me to close': Contractor appealing after business licence revoked

<https://www.sudbury.com/local-news/theyre-trying-to-force-me-to-close-contractor-appealing-after-business-licence-revoked-1394694>

Canadian Contractor Magazine

April 03, 2019 – 'Sudbury ON, clients of controversial contractor Eco Life take to the streets'

<https://www.canadiancontractor.ca/canadian-contractor/sudbury-ont-clients-of-controversial-contractor-take-to-the-streets/1003285557/>

April 10, 2019 - 'Sudbury Police confirm ongoing investigations into Eco Life'

https://www.canadiancontractor.ca/canadian-contractor/sudbury-police-confirm-ongoing-investigations-into-eco-life/1003285602/?fbclid=IwAR2jCGLRPFITTyLcCh-OCbjS0tOjjGn-VsJf2oTAK_nXFJdL5-jJivV6_A

April 25, 2019 – 'Update: Police arrest and charge Eco Life's David Murray'

<https://www.canadiancontractor.ca/canadian-contractor/update-police-arrest-and-charge-eco-lifes-david-murray/1003285709/>

ECOLIFE HOME IMPROVEMENTS INC.

BUILDING RENOVATOR / LICENCE LATE RENEWAL DECEMBER 31ST

Contact



7052223261



DAVIDMURRAY-ECOLIFE@HOTMAIL.COM (mailto:DAVIDMURRAY-ECOLIFE@HOTMAIL.COM)





Address



850 NOTRE DAME AVE
SUDBURY, ON, P3A2T4

License For Approval

Renewal

▼

Building

▼



People Involved

Copy

Excel

PDF

Print

Clear

Search:

Type	Last Name	First Name	Phone	Has License	Expiry Date	Designation
Owner	MURRAY	DAVID	7052223261	No		  (/Persons/Details/1258)

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries

Previous

1

Next

Licenses

Copy

Excel

PDF

Print

Search:

Status	License Number	Year	Effective	Expires	Cost	Receipt Date	Receipt	
Expired	2018012141	2018	2018-Jan-30	2018-Dec-31	\$160.50	2018-Jan-30	1007912	  
Expired	2017012141	2017	2017-Oct-05	2017-Dec-31	\$150.00	2017-Oct-05	998407	  

Status	License Number	Year	Effective	Expires	Cost	Receipt Date	Receipt	
Expired	2016012141	2016	2016-Mar-01	2016-Dec-31	\$150.00	2016-Mar-01	929282	  
Expired	2015012141	2015	2015-Aug-06	2015-Dec-31	\$150.00	2015-Aug-06	911267	  
Expired	2014012141	2014	2014-Aug-28	2014-Dec-31	\$150.00	2014-Aug-28	869588	  
Expired	2013012141	2013	2013-May-16	2013-Dec-31	\$150.00	2013-May-16	808880	  

Showing 1 to 6 of 6 entries

Previous

1

Next

Comments

Created On	User Account	Text	
2018-Apr-10	Administrator	GOOGLE SEARCH MARCH 5, 2015 INDICATED CHANGE OF ADDRESS: 555 BARRYDOWNE RD. SUDBURY ON P3A 3T4 RENEWAL CARD FORWARDED TO THIS ADDRESS. JD	 
2018-Apr-10	Administrator	2014 REMINDER CARD RETURNED UNCLAIMED	 
2018-Apr-10	Administrator	CALLED - LEFT VOICE MAIL JULY 28 2015 - JAMES GERVAIS	 
2018-Apr-10	Administrator	CUSTOMER CAME IN TO PAY FEE WITHOUT LIABILITY/WSIB BACK UP TODAY. CUSTOMER WAS ABRUPT/RUDE. CUSTOMER WAS INFORMED THAT LIABILITY/WSIB WOULD NEED TO BE SUBMITTED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN LICENCE. CUSTOMER WANTED TO ATTEND MAYOR'S OFFICE TO DISCUSS THE MATTER AND WAS VERY UPSET THAT I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PRINT LICENCE. I ASKED CUSTOMER TO COME BACK WITH REQUIRED DOCUMENTS. BUILDING SERVICES WERE ADVISED THAT THE RENOVATOR WAS NOT UP TO DATE WITH HIS DOCUMENTATION. TL	 
2018-Apr-10	Administrator	CUSTOMER SENT SOMEONE IN TO SUBMIT DOCUMENTS APRIL 13, 2016 TO RECEIVE LICENCE. I SPOKE WITH OWNER ON THE PHONE TO EXPLAIN AND HE WAS VERY RUDE AND DISRESPECTFUL TO MYSELF DUE TO THE FACT THAT HE WANTED THE LICENCE ON THE SPOT EVEN THOUGH THE RENEWAL CAME DUE DECEMBER 31, 2015 BECAUSE HE WANTED TO PULL A PERMIT TODAY.	 

Created On	User Account	Text	
2018-Apr-10	Administrator	BUSINESS LICENCE RETURNED TO OFFICE JUNE 20, 2016 WITH NO SUCH ADDRESS LISTED. ADDRESS THAT IS ON FILE CAME BACK AS WELL AS THE 1716 REGIONAL ROAD 13. LICENCE WILL BE IN FILING CABINET IN CASE VENDOR COMES INTO OFFICE J.L	 
2018-Apr-10	Administrator	INSURANCE EXPIRES- JULY 7TH, 2018 WSIB EXPIRES- AUGUST 19,2017	 
2018-Apr-10	Administrator	OCTOBER 05, 2017- MANAGER SPOKE TO DAVID MURRAY AS PART OF A REVIEW OF HIS FILE WHERE HE WAS ASKING FOR A LICENCE TO BE ISSUED WHILE HE WAITED FOR A COMPLETED POLICE CHECK. IN REVIEW OF HIS FILE, THE MANAGER ADVISED THAT A LICENCE WOULD BE ISSUED SPECIFICALLY ONLY UNDER THE CONTEXT THAT HE FOLLOW UP WITH PROVIDING A POLICE RECORD CHECK AS SOON AS IT IS RECEIVED. FURTHER, HE WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PAYMENT OF ALL OUTSTANDING LATE FEES IN ORDER TO RECEIVE HIS LICENCE. THE MANAGER SPECIFICALLY EXPLAINED THAT FAILING TO PROVIDE THE COMPLETED CHECK AND NOT PAYING THE OUTSTANDING LATE FEES WOULD RESULT IN LICENCE REVOCATION IN 2018. HE ACKNOWLEDGED HE UNDERSTOOD AND WOULD COMPLY. IT WAS ALSO EXPLAINED THAT IT'S BEEN NOTED THAT HE HAS NOT TREATED STAFF WITH A LEVEL OF RESPECT AT ALL TIMES AND FAILING TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE COULD IMPACT HIS BUSINESS LICENCE.	 
2018-Apr-10	Administrator	PHONED AND LEFT MESSAGE JUNE 06, 2017 IN REGARDS TO MISSING DOC'S FOR RENEWAL J.L	 
2019-Apr-03	Teresa Labelle	Added to license:	 

Case ID 849407

Caller Information

User: clicoff

Known Callers: 7

Anonymous Callers: 2

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Home Phone: [REDACTED]

Work Phone: [REDACTED]

Mobile Phone: [REDACTED]

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Home Phone: [REDACTED]

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Home Phone: [REDACTED]

P.O. Box # -Any-

Call Taker Notes (F -Any-

Issued Vicious Dog -Any-

Issued Trespass O -Any-

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Home Phone: [REDACTED]

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Home Phone: [REDACTED]

Call Taker Notes (F -Any-

Issued Vicious Dog -Any-

Issued Trespass O -Any-

P.O. Box # -Any-

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Home Phone: [REDACTED]

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

User: clicoff

Mobile Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Call Taker Notes (F -Any-
Issued Vicious Dog -Any-P.O. Box # -Any-
Issued Trespass O -Any-**Case Information**

Case Type: By-Law Inquiries Category: By-Law Enforcement
 Status: Assigned Priority: Normal
 Expected Completion: 15-Jan-2019 08:27:32 AM
 Last Updated: 14-May-2019 11:12:28 AM
 Submitted By: Sylvie Martin On 21-Dec-2018 08:27:32 AM
 Assigned To: Jamie Lavigne (By-Law and Licensing Clerk) On 21-Dec-2018 08:27:32 AM
 Access Code: 746153
 Escalated To: Brendan Adair (Manager of Security & By-Law) On 21-Jan-2019 11:07:03 AM
 Subject: Inquiry about Contractors
 Description: Please see attached email.
 The case was Re-Active
 created as:
 This request was E-mail
 received by

Location

Location: [REDACTED] (Verified with GIS)
 OWNER2NAME [REDACTED] MAILING1 [REDACTED]
 MAILING4 [REDACTED] MAILING5 [REDACTED]
 LEGALDESCRIP TION [REDACTED] WARD 7
 ZONING R1.D18 PROPERTYCOD Single-family detached (not on water)
 E
 OWNER1NAME [REDACTED] LOCATION -Any-
 ALERT

Contacts

Work	Staff Member	Phone [Public]	Email	Fax
By-Law Inquiries Case	Jamie Lavigne (By-Law and Licensing Clerk)	(705) 674-4455 x2320	jamie.lavigne@greatersudbury.ca	

Comments

Date	Type	Entry	Relates To	Created By
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User: clicoff

14-May-2019 11:12:28 AM	Case Note	Spoke to David Weebs, Sudbury Bailiff's office with regards to his request for information. Bailiff's office request for information with regards to EcoLife Home Improvements Inc. official name, as well as if the name includes a numbered company on the application. A search was completed on the Business Licensing data base confirming the only name given was EcoLife Home Improvements Inc. The paper based copy of the documentation contains only Ecolife Home Improvements Inc. as well. Later a request by the Licensing Enforcement Officer T. Labelle was made to the Bailiff's office to have the request in writing, however the Bailiff's office has not responded. See attached. File Attached: EcoLife Home Improvements Inc. Information request to Sheriff .rtf	By-Law Inquiries	Teresa Labelle
13-May-2019 09:20:44 AM	Case Note	Spoke with [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is currently writing a witness statement for the Police in Sudbury regarding [REDACTED] involvement/experience with EcoLife [REDACTED] will be including [REDACTED] cancelled cheque(s), [REDACTED] report to the Ontario Consumer Protection agency etc. However [REDACTED] has a very busy work schedule at present and is unable to complete this for another week or so? [REDACTED] was provided MLEO's contact info when [REDACTED] is able to forward his statement.	By-Law Inquiries	Craig Moxam
13-May-2019 08:47:52 AM	Case Communication	MLEO SHERIDAN received email forwarded for a resident who is [REDACTED] years old and unable to email the information [REDACTED]. See attached summary of issues File Attached: [REDACTED] Complaint.pdf	By-Law Inquiries	Brittnee Sheridan
13-May-2019 08:34:14 AM	Case Communication	MLEO SHERIDAN Spoke with [REDACTED] regarding [REDACTED] claim against EcoLife. [REDACTED]'s property in question is located in French River, however, [REDACTED] is still interested in adding [REDACTED] information to the claim since it is a Sudbury business. Work was completed on [REDACTED]'s property but these are the two main issues: 1) The work was completed improperly (see attached PDFs for pictures 2) Work was exponentially more expensive than other quotes for the same work File Attached: [REDACTED] complaint against Ecolife Home Improvements.pdf	By-Law Inquiries	Brittnee Sheridan
09-May-2019 11:01:02 AM	Case Note	CASE 849407 File Attached: EcoLifeAPPEAL.pdf	By-Law Inquiries	Jayna Bradley
01-May-2019 02:54:17 PM	Case Note	MLEO Gauthier spoke to [REDACTED] who provided documentation from [REDACTED] dealing with Eco-Life. See attached PDF for statements and court decisions made in relation to this matter. File Attached: [REDACTED] Court Papers.pdf	By-Law Inquiries	Chad Gauthier

29-Apr-2019 02:31:41 PM	Case Note	At approximately 1415 officer SAGLE spoke with [REDACTED], cell [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] advised that [REDACTED] was the one dealing with the matter as [REDACTED] was working, wanted to add that [REDACTED] had attended the Eco Life office on Notre Dame approximately five times during the time. [REDACTED] informed SAGLE that [REDACTED] was quoted for work to be completed at a cost of \$12531.70, where on October 13, 2017 a cheque to Ecolife was given in the amount of \$6265.85 as a deposit, where work was suppose to be completed by December 25, 2017. [REDACTED] explained that after several interactions and phone calls a door was put in on February 2018, initially quoted for this work of \$2300.00, ended up costing \$3000.00. [REDACTED] advised after several interactions and work not being completed [REDACTED] cancelled the work, and requested the remaining amount of the deposit of \$3265.85 to be returned. [REDACTED] explained that the money in the deposit was never returned, and the work was never completed to this date of April 29, 2019.	By-Law Inquiries	Gerald Sagle
29-Apr-2019 01:38:23 PM	Case Note	Email from [REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED] File Attached: Dave MurrayEco-life, [REDACTED] [REDACTED].pdf	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
18-Apr-2019 04:20:39 PM	Case Note	Registered letter returned unclaimed. File Attached: RN 255 727 646 CA.pdf	By-Law Inquiries	Gilles Lefebvre

User: clicoff

09-Apr-2019 04:33:57 PM	Case Note	At approximately 1525 officer SAGLE received a call from MURRAY, MURRAY advised that he was available to meet in person at the location 850 Notre Dame, officer SAGLE advised he would be on his way where Manager ADAIR would be attending. At approximately 1532 officer SAGLE received a call from MURRAY asking what vehicle officer SAGLE was driving, officer SAGLE advised a Ford F150, MURRAY then asked "is it marked" officer SAGLE responded "yes". MURRAY then requested to meet at Tim Hortons on Lasalle/Notre Dame, MURRAY did not want to disclose the reason. Officer SAGLE advised he would be on his way. At approximately 1548 officer SAGLE arrived at the Tim Hortons on Lasalle/Notre Dame to meet with MURRAY David who was driving a white Yukon. Officer SAGLE handed the form, advising to open the form in order to discuss further. MURRAY then directed his attention to ADAIR and asked for identification. ADAIR identified himself, where MURRAY said "oh ya I know you". MURRAY then asked for the reason for attending, ADAIR advised of the appeal provisions on the notice, and advised that the license would be revoked. MURRAY then raised his voice, advising that "he has paid lots of money for permits with the city". ADAIR at this time advised there have been many complaints received, and attempted to discuss further, MURRAY began raising his voice. After attempts to discuss officer SAGLE felt as though MURRAY was not receptive at this time and began walking back to the vehicle, MURRAY then swore several times, and appeared to have sped out of the Tim Hortons Parking lot with his White Yukon vehicle.	By-Law Inquiries	Gerald Sagle
09-Apr-2019 04:27:25 PM	Case Note	At approximately 1115 officer SAGLE and officer LEFEBVRE arrived at 850 Notre Dame Avenue, Sudbury. Officer SAGLE seen that all the lights were off in the building labeled Eco Life Home Improvements, hours of operation were 9:00-5:00pm. Officer SAGLE knocked on the glass window, no response. Officer SAGLE seen number 705-222-3261, contacted to speak with a male who identified as MURRAY David. Officer SAGLE advised that he had a form to issue directly to MURRAY, advised that he was looking to meet. Officer SAGLE discussed the importance of receiving the form, as registered mail had not been picked up. MURRAY at this time said "I know what you guys are fucking doing", "I always get permits, I have paid lots of money, I have a lawyer right now". MURRAY then said "this call is being recorded", officer SAGLE recommended meeting to receive receipt of the form, MURRAY then express more frustration, and said he would call officer SAGLE later to confirm.	By-Law Inquiries	Gerald Sagle
28-Mar-2019 09:46:14 AM	Case Note	. File Attached: 20190328093841.pdf	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne

26 of 76

User: clicoff

28-Mar-2019 09:45:55 AM	Case Note	Registered letter sent.	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
20-Mar-2019 10:59:00 AM	Create Related	System Case linked to (Case ID: 871445)	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
20-Mar-2019 10:59:00 AM	Create Related	System Created new related case (Case ID: 871445)	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne

20-Mar-2019 10:43:57 AM

Case Note

>>>

< [REDACTED] > 3/14/19 4:00

PM >>>

By-Law Inquiries

Jamie Lavigne

Greetings Melissa,

I understand that the city of Sudbury is currently evaluating whether to renew the business license for David Murray and EcoLife Home Improvements Inc.

I would like to urge you to not renew his license.

Bylaw 2004-350 ,section 24d states that a license may be revoked if the conduct of the applicant or licensee affords reasonable grounds for belief that the applicant or licensee will not carry on the business in accordance with the law or with honesty and integrity.

I believe that you must not renew his license on these grounds, to protect the good people of Sudbury. I hope enough people come to you with these complaints. In our case with the Ontario Consumer Protection Investigation (Case EBN-1629Z9P5) and our Competition Bureau Investigation (File R696201). We will also be contacting officer Andrew Williams at the Greater Sudbury Police Service to discuss possible Fraud charges when he returns from vacation next week.

Our experience with EcoLife and David Murray have been absolutely devastating. I have learned way more about the legalities of contracts, the Ontario Consumer Protection Act, the Competition Act, small claims court, then any citizen should have to know.

I have recently discovered that our issues with EcoLife Home Improvements Inc and David Murray are not an isolated issue.

For your consideration, here are some other facts:

1 - 2 current convictions under the Ontario Consumer Protection Act (searchable here: <https://www.consumerbewarelist.mgs.gov.on.ca/en/cbl/search>)

2 - Actively being investigation for MORE violations to the Consumer Protection Act. My family has a case open for investigation Case EBN-1629Z9P5.

3 - I am told there are 14 other active investigations for Consumer Protection Act violations. Please call Consumer protection at 416-326-8610 to confirm.

4 - BBB F rating (<https://www.bbb.org/ca/on/sudbury/profile/general-contractor/ecolife-home-improvements-inc-0117-48448>)

5 - Multiple Small Claims Court trials going on. I've attached two instances from the last 2 weeks as seen on <http://www.ontariocourtdates.ca/daily-docket.aspx>

6 - Protests by angry customers who feel

		he is breaking the law (https://www.sudbury.com/local-news/protesters-say-ecolife-has-scammed-sudburians-out-of-hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars-1320057) I urge the city to very carefully consider it's obligations to it's citizens in this matter. Regards, [REDACTED] (on behalf of [REDACTED])		
20-Mar-2019 10:40:10 AM	Case Note	>> [REDACTED] < [REDACTED] > 3/14/19 10:43 AM >>> Just a quick story on Dave Murray, he's a con artist looking for deposits and you never see him again! Gave my [REDACTED] a quote in 2016 and we've been in court since 2017 trying to get our money back (\$16000)	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
20-Mar-2019 10:33:02 AM	Case Note	[REDACTED] - claiming to be a victim of EcoLife, David MURRAY In Nov 2018 - EcoLife starting work on front entrance deck. [REDACTED] initially wanted to just resurface the deck and minor repairs but claims to be convinced by Mr. MURRAY to redo the entire deck and enlarge it without a permit. It was discovered by [REDACTED] that [REDACTED] needed a permit for the deck due to the height, size and front yard location, [REDACTED] attended Building Services and was made aware that [REDACTED] also needed a Minor Variance(Bruno Roy and Paul Holland - have helped [REDACTED]). According to [REDACTED], Mr. MURRAY asked [REDACTED] not pursue the Minor Variance and the permit. Now the deck needs to be removed as it's not meeting Code and the Minor Variance [REDACTED] applied for requires [REDACTED] to cut the deck back in size. Current file with Building Services - ACR. The work is not completed, spoke with Mr. MURRAY in March 2019, [REDACTED] is not wanting Mr. MURRAY to return to complete the deck but wanted the remainder of the supplies [REDACTED] paid for so [REDACTED] can have the work completed by [REDACTED] self or another contractor. Consumer Protection Act fined him for not completing work based on a contact - for another person/property owner - however [REDACTED]'s pursuing the same avenue.	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
15-Mar-2019 12:33:14 PM	Create Related	System Case linked to (Case ID: 869470)	By-Law Inquiries	Melissa Laalo
15-Mar-2019 12:33:14 PM	Create Related	System Created new related case (Case ID: 869470)	By-Law Inquiries	Melissa Laalo

User: clicoff

14-Mar-2019 09:57:50 AM	Case Note	>>> Melissa Laalo 3/14/19 9:14 AM >>> Morning [REDACTED], The operational status of this business is part of the By-Law Departments investigation. Best regards Melissa >>> [REDACTED] < [REDACTED] > 3/13/19 8:01 PM >>> Can he have his business open now even though he has no business license? Because I beleive his office has an open sign on it	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
14-Mar-2019 09:31:52 AM	Case Note	https://www.bbb.org/ca/on/sudbury/profile/general-contractor/ecolife-home-improvements-inc-0117-48448?sfns=mo	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
14-Mar-2019 09:31:21 AM	Case Note	https://northernontario.ctvnews.ca/mobile/sudbury-homeowners-upset-with-contractor-over-unfinished-work-1.4328429?cid=sm:tr ueanthem:ctvnorthernontario:manualpost&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+New+Content+(Feed)&utm_content=5c82d14500bd47000112c13b&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=facebook&sfns=mo	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
14-Mar-2019 09:30:35 AM	Case Note	Facebook message directing to contact GSPS File Attached: IMAGE.jpeg	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne

User: clicoff

14-Mar-2019 09:28:41 AM	Case Note	Hello [REDACTED], Thank you very much for reaching out to us with your experience dealing with the business EcoLife. I may be contacting you for more information in the near future. In the interim, your information will be added to our business licensing files to hopefully ensure your experience does not happen to others in the community. Best regards Melissa Acting Manager of By-Law Services Melissa Laalo By-Law Co-Ordinator - Animal Care and Control City of Greater Sudbury PO Box 5000, STN 'A', 200 Brady St. Sudbury, ON P3A 5P3 705-674-4455 x. 2433 Fax: 705-671-0871 melissa.laalo@city.greatersudbury.on.ca >>> [REDACTED] > 3/13/19 10:49 AM >>> Hello, I have had a bad home renovation experience with Dave Murray and EcoLife Home Improvements. As part of a Facebook group for those who have been victims of his criminal activity, I have been informed that you are looking for information. The rumour I've heard is that he does not hold a current business licence in Greater Sudbury. So far I have issued reports about my experience with Ontario Consumer Protection, the BBB, the GSPS, and have started into filing at small claims court. I have a lead on a Paralegal who has had success in forcing Dave Murray into settlements where he actually pays back money he has stolen from his clients. Please let me know what kind of info you need. I have contracts and cancelled cheques, but little work was done, despite the fact that he was paid in full for the work in August of 2017. Thanks [REDACTED]	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
14-Mar-2019 09:28:17 AM	Case Note	Email complaint from [REDACTED]	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne

14-Mar-2019 09:27:06 AM

Case Note

Good morning Mr. [REDACTED],

By-Law Inquiries

Jamie Lavigne

Thank you for sharing your concerns with the Mayor's Office. We have reached out to our Manager of By Law and he indicated that staff from by law will be contacting you to obtain more information regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Office of the Mayor
705.674.4455 ext. 2514
mayor@greatersudbury.ca

>>> [REDACTED]
< [REDACTED] > 3/11/2019

7:27 PM >>>

Good evening Mayor. My name is [REDACTED] and I am writing you in regards to an incident involving a contracting company in town called EcoLife Home Improvements. My [REDACTED] and I had this company come in and were to install windows back in 2016. We had met with Dave Murray who is owner of this company in Jan of 2016. We were to have windows and a front door installed in March I believe when weather was becoming nicer. When March came about we had seem nothing nor heard anything of windows or door being installed. They had missed the date that was written on a quote to be started. Under the Consumer Protection Act the business has a month to comply with the work to be done after that we have the right to be given our money back. This was a battle that has been ongoing for three years now. We are not the only people he has scammed and ripped off. And if he is not shut down and his license to operate taken away he is only going to keep doing this and keep getting away with it. I am a member of a Facebook group called "Victims of EcoLife home improvements". I would strongly recommend you visit this page and read complaints of people who have also dealt with him. He is a con artist and he will do anything to not get jobs done, or refund people their money. He would stop as low as putting leens on people's homes just so he can get his money. The question I ask you Mayor Bigger is, is this someone you would want running a business in Sudbury and saying you are proud or very happy to be doing any business? I think this man should be jailed for fraudulent actions. My [REDACTED] and I have given him money for product that we have not yet received and will never. So this would be

		constituted as fraud. My [REDACTED], I and the rest of the victims of Sudbury and area would really like your help in this matter if possible. Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you regarding this matter.		
14-Mar-2019 09:25:14 AM	Case Note	Email of complaint against Ecolife Home Improvements from [REDACTED].	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
14-Mar-2019 09:23:21 AM	Case Note	Emails and texts between [REDACTED] and David Murray (Ecolife Home Improvements) File Attached: 20190314090640.pdf	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
05-Feb-2019 04:05:44 PM	Case Communication	Resident has sent another email saying that nobody has contacted him back, I have confirmed with Jamie that she is looking into the matter and told the resident on a few occasions that as soon as they had information that they would contact the resident to discuss. This information has been relayed to the resident via email.	By-Law Inquiries	Sylvie Martin
01-Feb-2019 12:07:18 PM	Case Communication	Resident emailing 311 looking to speak with a By-Law officer as they have not been contacted as of yet.	By-Law Inquiries	Christine Dube
30-Jan-2019 02:08:19 PM	Case Communication	Resident has called back for a follow up, caller was transferred to X 2320.	By-Law Inquiries	Sylvie Martin
21-Jan-2019 11:06:56 AM	Escalation	System Case ID:849407 escalated to Brendan Adair (Manager of Security & By-Law), Melissa Laalo (By-Law Coordinator - Animal Care and Control), Paul Denniston (By-Law Coordinator - Security) because of Case Non-Completion Escalation	By-Law Inquiries	SYSTEM
16-Jan-2019 10:56:32 AM	Escalation	System Case ID:849407 escalated to Brendan Adair (Manager of Security & By-Law), Melissa Laalo (By-Law Coordinator - Animal Care and Control), Paul Denniston (By-Law Coordinator - Security) because of Case Non-Completion Escalation	By-Law Inquiries	SYSTEM
15-Jan-2019 10:54:28 AM	Escalation	System Case ID:849407 escalated to Brendan Adair (Manager of Security & By-Law), Melissa Laalo (By-Law Coordinator - Animal Care and Control), Paul Denniston (By-Law Coordinator - Security) because of Case Non-Completion Escalation	By-Law Inquiries	SYSTEM
07-Jan-2019 03:51:11 PM	Case Note	Telephoned complainant January 07, 2018 at 3:50pm to request a written statement with details pertaining to the incident with Ecolife Home Improvements. Left a voicemail to return call.	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
03-Jan-2019 02:01:01 PM	Case Note	Email sent to 311. File Attached: Criminal contractirs (3).docx	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
03-Jan-2019 01:58:55 PM	Case Note	Spoke with [REDACTED] (of complainant). [REDACTED] stated after "Ecolife Home Improvements" left the home they did some research and came across some bad reviews and no longer felt comfortable hiring this contractor to do the work they agreed to. [REDACTED] texted the owner of Ecolife "David Murray" and requested that the \$2000.00 deposit be returned. As of today's date they have not received their deposit.	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne

User: clicoff

03-Jan-2019 12:52:35 PM	Case Note	Left message on voicemail to return my call if further information is needed.	By-Law Inquiries	Jamie Lavigne
21-Dec-2018 08:27:32 AM	Case Note	System	By-Law Inquiries	Sylvie Martin
21-Dec-2018 08:27:32 AM	Case Assignment	System Case ID: 849407 has been assigned to By-Law and Licensing Clerk (Lavigne, Jamie).	By-Law Inquiries	Sylvie Martin
21-Dec-2018 08:27:32 AM	Case Submission	System Case was submitted by Sylvie Martin.	By-Law Inquiries	Sylvie Martin

HAND DELIVERED, ACR # 849407

April 09, 2019

David Murray
Ecolife Home Improvements Inc.
850 Notre Dame Avenue
Sudbury, ON
P3A 2T4

Dear Mr. Murray

Please be advised that the 2018 Municipal Business License for Ecolife Home Improvements Inc. has expired as of December 31, 2018. In accordance with the City of Greater Sudbury's Business Licensing By-Law 2004-350 a Building Renovator licence is required to operate your business within the City of Greater Sudbury.

In addition, on December 21, 2018 the By-Law and Licensing office received a complaint that the services offered by David Murray on behalf of Ecolife Home Improvements Inc, were not being carried out in accordance with the law or with honesty and integrity. As a result, the City of Greater Sudbury By-Law and Licensing office has refused to renew your 2019 Building Renovator Licence for Ecolife Home Improvements Inc.

The grounds for refusal of the licence are pursuant to section (24) (e) of By-Law 2004-350;

(e) "The Issuer of Licences, or, where there is a referral to Council, the Council , may suspend, revoke or refuse to issue any licence that may be issued under the provisions of any part of this By-Law, if, in the case of a corporate applicant or licensee, the conduct of its officers, directors, employees or agents affords reasonable grounds for belief that the business will not be carried on in accordance with the law or with honesty and integrity"

Please keep in mind that, in absence of a license, you will not be permitted to host business in the City of Greater Sudbury as it relates to building renovation. Failure to comply will result in an offence of the Business Licensing By-Law 2004-350 and you will be subject to fines.

Section 24 of the By-law provides for specifics to refer the matter to Council for its consideration. A refusal to issue or renew a Business Licence by the Licence Issuer may offer an applicant the ability to have their matter reviewed by Council in accordance with procedure in Section 27. You may appeal this refusal by doing so in writing by April 11, 2019. If a request is received, the Licence Issuer will review the matter to confirm whether it qualifies for a hearing under the By-law and you will be notified of the same in writing.

Please call me at extension 2295 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Brendan Adair, Manager of Security and By-law Services- Licence Issuer
City of Greater Sudbury

Cc: Jamie LAVIGNE, Licensing Clerk

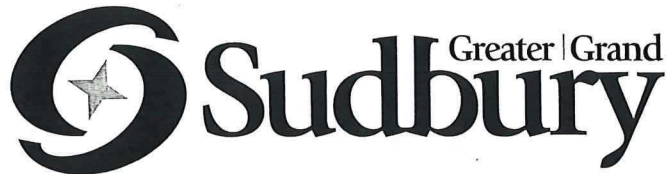
PO BOX 5000 STN A
200 BRADY STREET
SUDBURY ON P3A 5P3

CP 5000 SUCCA
200, RUE BRADY
SUDBURY ON P3A 5P3

705.671.2489

www.greatersudbury.ca
www.grandsudbury.ca

City of Greater Sudbury
Ville du Grand Sudbury



March 28, 2019

David Murray
Ecolife Home Improvements Inc.
850 Notre Dame Avenue
Sudbury, ON
P3A 2T4

Dear Mr. Murray

CANADA POSTES POST CANADA		REGISTERED DOMESTIC CUSTOMER RECEIPT	RECOMMANDÉ RÉGIME INTÉRIEUR REÇU DU CLIENT	R
To Name	Destinataire Nom	FOR DELIVERY CONFIRMATION		
Address		CONFIRMATION DE LA LIVRAISON		
City / Prov. / Postal Code		www.canadapost.ca or/ou www.postescanada.ca		
Ville / Prov. / Code postal		1 888 550-6333		
Declared Value	Valeur déclarée	CPC Tracking Number Numéro de repérage de la BCP		
	\$	RN 255 727 646 CA		
33-086-584 (14-06)				

Please be advised that the 2018 Municipal Business License for Ecolife Home Improvements Inc. has expired as of December 31, 2018. In accordance with the City of Greater Sudbury's Business Licensing By-Law 2004-350 a Building Renovator licence is required to operate your business within the City of Greater Sudbury.

In addition, on December 21, 2018 the By-Law and Licensing office received a complaint that the services offered by David Murray on behalf of Ecolife Home Improvements Inc, were not being carried out in accordance with the law or with honesty and integrity. As a result, the City of Greater Sudbury By-Law and Licensing office has refused to renew your 2019 Building Renovator Licence for Ecolife Home Improvements Inc.

The grounds for refusal of the licence are pursuant to section (24) (e) of By-Law 2004-350;

(e) "The Issuer of Licences, or, where there is a referral to Council, the Council , may suspend, revoke or refuse to issue any licence that may be issued under the provisions of any part of this By-Law, if, in the case of a corporate applicant or licensee, the conduct of its officers, directors, employees or agents affords reasonable grounds for belief that the business will not be carried on in accordance with the law or with honesty and integrity"

Please keep in mind that, in absence of a license, you will not be permitted to host business in the City of Greater Sudbury as it relates to building renovation. Failure to comply will result in an offence of the Business Licensing By-Law 2004-350 and you will be subject to fines.

Section 24 of the By-law provides for specifics to refer the matter to Council for its consideration. A refusal to issue or renew a Business Licence by the Licence Issuer may offer an applicant the ability to have their matter reviewed by Council in accordance with procedure in Section 27. You may appeal this refusal by doing so in writing by April 11, 2019. If a request is received, the Licence Issuer will review the matter to confirm whether it qualifies for a hearing under the By-law and you will be notified of the same in writing.

Please call me at extension 2295 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Brendan Adair, Manager of Security and By-law Services- Licence Issuer
City of Greater Sudbury

Cc: Jamie LAVIGNE, Licensing Clerk

HAND DELIVERED

April 11th 2019

Greater City of Sudbury

200 Brady Street

Sudbury, On

P3A 5P3

By-Law Services

Attention Brendan Adair,

On behalf of EcoLife Home Improvements Inc, I acknowledge with surprise your letter of April 9th 2019. This letter is to advise that a fullsome appeal of the complaints leading to this unfortunate decision is forthcoming. The nature of the complaints has not been available to me or EcoLife Home Improvements Inc. To that end, a request under the Freedom of Information and Personal Privacy act has been filed with the City of Greater Sudbury. Until such time as details of the complaints is made known, and given the frivolous and vexatious nature of claims being made in public sphere, EcoLife Home Improvements Inc and myself believe that this letter should serve as a notice of appeal.

Yours sincerely,



David Murray

President

EcoLife Home Improvements

Business Details

Current as of May 13, 2019 at 08:42 PM

Business or individual name	Ecolife Home Improvements Inc.
Other name (if any)	
Address	850 Notre Dame Avenue Sudbury, ONTARIO P3A 2T4 Canada
Phone	705-590-2185
Fax	
Email address	info@ecolifehomeimprovements.ca
Description of complaint (including the act the complaint falls under)	
Action taken by Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (if any)	
Charges laid (if any)	Ecolife Home Improvements Inc. Consumer Protection Act, 2002, CPA 2002 - Direct Agr - Fail to Deliver Valid Contract, 2 charges on 2/25/2016, fined \$500.00, 1 convicted MURRAY, DAVID (/en/cbl/businessdetail/fcbdca8e-d237-e711-8d08-00155d3b69ab) Consumer Protection Act, 2002, CPA 2002 - Direct Agr - Fail to Deliver Valid Contract, 2 charges on 2/25/2016, restitution ordered \$5,000.00, 1 convicted, 1 no conviction

[[New Search \(/en/cbl/search\)](/en/cbl/search)]

Please note:

Not all consumer complaints submitted to the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services are posted to the Consumer Beware List. A business or individual is only guilty of the offences in the "charges laid" section of the search results when they are found guilty in a court of law.

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Sudbury, ON clients of controversial contractor Eco Life take to the streets

More than two dozen members of the public staged a public rally against Eco Life Home Improvements and its owner, David Murray

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April 3, 2019 by John Bleasby

More than two dozen members of the public took to the streets of Sudbury, ON March 7 to publicize their complaints against Eco Life Home Improvements Inc. and the company's owner, David Murray.

The firm's clients said their projects have been subject to unreasonably lengthy start-up delays, incomplete work, and allegedly falsified documents. The contractor has a previous Ontario Consumer Protection Act conviction. Although none of the current accusations have been proven in court, the protesters said they were staging the protest because of the reluctance of various authorities to investigate the firm's activities. The rally occurred at the corner of Paris and Brady Streets in downtown near City Hall.



Over 24 citizens suffered the cold in early March to protest frustration with Sudbury Police (GSPS) concerning Eco Life Home Improvements Inc.

(photo courtesy of Matt Durnan/Sudbury.com)

A history of Consumer Act convictions

Murray and his company were previously convicted in February 2016 for failing "to deliver a valid contract" under the Ontario Consumer Protection Act. Murray was ordered to make restitution of \$5,000 and was also fined \$500. Murray and his company are currently listed on Ontario's Consumer Beware List. However no ban or probationary halt to either the company's or Murray's commercial activities were included in the sentence. Since the convictions, an increasing number of

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Contacted by *Canadian Contractor* by phone, David Murray declined to comment on the record regarding any of the allegations made against him and his company. He did, however, issue a statement earlier in March, published in the Sudbury Star, blaming the sudden shutdown of Ontario's GreenOn rebate program last fall for the delays in completing work.

The Sudbury BBB has been a reliable source of consumer information

Murray and his company have a long history of disputes with customers. According to the Sudbury Better Business Bureau, Eco Life was opened in 2010. The BBB web site currently shows consumer disputes against the company going back to 2017 — some 22 in total—with 10 unresolved or unanswered issues. Eco Life has an overall BBB rating of "F", plus highly visible Notice of Accreditation Revocation.



David Murray is the owner of Eco Life Home Improvements Inc. of Sudbury ON

Business organizations have dropped Eco Life as a member

The Sudbury Chamber of Commerce continues to list Eco Life on its website, although Syed Raza, manager for communications at the Chamber, confirmed with *Canadian Contractor* that the company has not been a member in good standing since 2015. The link to Eco Life on the Chamber's website does not function. Green Economy North, a membership-based business program that educates and advises companies in Northern Ontario on sustainable business practices, no longer considers Eco Life a member. Executive Director Rebecca Danard told *Canadian Contractor* that this was due to both the non-payment of dues and other issues surrounding the company.

Banned from the Sudbury Home Show

Luc Bock first met David Murray when he was 19 years of age. The pair were working for a leading siding company in Sudbury at the time. They later became partners in a business called Prestige Home Centre. This lasted about a year. "Use of me in the middle of the drama," Bock told *Canadian Contractor*. He sold his interest in Prestige to Murray in 2000. Bock moved on to become a

I agree

successful home builder in the area and President of the Sudbury & District Home Builders' Association in 2007 and 2008. Bock recalled how Murray wanted to exhibit his business, now called Eco Life Home Improvements, at the Association's local home show each spring. "We were getting so many complaints. He was using the Home Builders Association to legitimize himself. Then his clients would call us and say, 'This is what happened, and I met him at your home show'. So we banned him about 10 years ago. He wasn't allowed to do the home show any longer."

Eco Life's active social media engagement is ongoing

Murray continues to aggressively market his home renovation business, sometimes with multiple posts each day on the company's Facebook page. As part of its ongoing marketing strategy, Eco Life has also never been shy about soliciting positive reviews on social media. As early as 2015, the company was offering prizes such as concert tickets and \$100 gift cards in exchange for 'likes'. As recently as October 18, 2018, the company Facebook page offered restaurant gift certificates as inducement for posting 5-Star reviews.



Eco Life's office and showroom, located at 850 Notre Dame Ave, Sudbury, ON

Website reviews are... mixed

Today, many rating services no longer list Eco Life on their web sites. Those who do include the local online Yellow Pages site with 2 positive reviews, and Google with 18, mostly negative. The web site pissedconsumer.com displays over 50 comments, almost entirely negative, plus many supplementary discussion posts. Meanwhile, the Eco Life Home Improvement web site itself is "Under Construction".

One major web site that continues to list Eco Life is HomeStars, which describes itself as, "Canada's largest and most-trusted source for connecting with home professionals." As recently as March 26, HomeStars indicated a 92 percent approval rating for Eco Life, including a high number of 10-star reviews — close to 20 in total. However, the HomeStars rating was dropped to 40 per cent a few days later. A banner at the top of Eco Life's page now declares, "This company has been flagged by our moderators for suspicious activity". Many reviews previously published have been now removed or tagged as not meeting HomeStars' criteria.

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Silence from Ontario Consumer Protection.

Sudbury Police Constable Andrew Williams of the GSPS Fraud Unit, confirmed to *Canadian Contractor* that a fraud investigation is underway. However, sources have told *Canadian Contractor* that unhappy customers have also registered more than 15 complaints with the Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services against Murray and Eco Life. The Ministry told *Canadian Contractor*, "To protect the confidentiality of any investigation, the ministry cannot confirm whether an investigation is being conducted." Historically, cases that are accepted for investigation can take up to two years to work through the Ministry's litigation process.



Marketing continues, using street signage and active social media messaging

24 Small Claims Court filing, so far

Several individual past customers of Eco Life are not waiting for Ontario's Consumer Protection Office. A source familiar with the Sudbury situation has told *Canadian Contractor* that Eco Life and Murray currently face as many as 24 separate Small Claims Court actions. Court documents confirm that on March 26 alone, Murray was in court for mediation hearings concerning four cases filed against him and/or his company. Some have also contacted their local MPP, France Gelin (Nickel Belt). A closed Facebook page for past customers, recently created, now allows them to share their experiences and stay up to date on proceedings.

Read Part Two: Sudbury Police respond to public pressure

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Sudbury police confirm ongoing investigations into Eco Life

Local MPP has brought additional cases to the Minister responsible for Consumer Protection

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April 10, 2019 by John Bleasby

Eco Life Home Improvements of Sudbury, Ontario and its owner David Murray face at least 24 Small Claims Court actions, *Canadian Contractor* has learned. Angry customers allege the previously convicted contractor has failed to either start or complete work on their homes after deposits, often as high as 50 per cent, were paid.

On March 7, some of Murray's customers held a street protest in downtown Sudbury near City Hall, attempting to pressure regulatory authorities to act against the contractor. In addition to the street protest, a closed group Facebook page now allows past customers to share experiences with Murray and his firm. "I'm still ashamed that I let me guard down and allowed so much of this to happen without much initial suspicion," one past client told *Canadian Contractor*.

Some customers allege that Murray back-dated contracts — denying the consumers the 10-day cooling off period prescribed by law.

Other customers allege that Murray filed financial applications for credit from lending agencies using false information. Over the past two weeks, Murray has appeared at least six preliminary Small Claims Court hearings. None of these allegations have been proven in court.



Over 24 citizens suffered the cold in early March to protest frustration with Sudbury Police (GSPS) concerning Eco Life Home Improvements Inc.

(photo courtesy of Matt Durnan/Sudbury.com)

City of Sudbury revokes Eco Life's business license

"The City of Greater Sudbury offers business licensing as a way to provide consumer protection," said Brendan Adair, Manager of Security and Bylaw in a statement. "When a business is operating contrary to the licensing agreement, we have the option to refuse, revoke and/or suspend their business license. In the case of EcoLife Home Improvements, a thorough investigation has found the company in contravention of the licensing agreement and so we have revoked their business license. Due to the nature of the many complaints received by the public, the case has been referred to the Greater Sudbury Police Service."

Customers concerned over police response

Some customers of Eco Life have been critical of the initial response of the Sudbury Police (GSPS) to the numerous complaints.

Angele Poulin is a young mother of two who, with her husband Sean Bazinet, hired Murray's company last April to install several replacement windows under the GreenOn energy rebate program. She said the couple paid a deposit of \$5,200, representing 50 per cent of the total contract, in the spring of 2018, with installation promised in June or July. Months passed. In a letter sent to Chief Paul Pedersen of the Greater Sudbury Police Service (GSPS), Poulin wrote, "As I watched the clock count down on the October 31, 2018 expiration date of the rebate program, it was clear that I had been conned — conned out of my windows, out of this rebate, and out of my money."

According to Poulin, Detective Constable Andy Williams of the GSPS Financial Crimes Unit told the couple that they had jeopardized their fraud allegations by firing Eco Life, despite waiting months beyond the promised installation date. "Apparently, we were supposed to wait years for these windows, and that 'June or July of 2018' was not really an expected date of installation," her letter to Pedersen continued. She also wrote that Williams suggested that the couple "work out a deal with Murray to complete the work." Many of those who have also contacted the Sudbury police say they have been told their issues are a civil matter that should be taken up in Small Claims Court.

Former police officer gets involved

Chantelle Gorham is a former Sudbury Police officer with an inside knowledge of the system. Although not a past client of Eco Life herself, she has been instrumental in assisting customers unfamiliar with the Small Claims Court and Ontario Consumer Protection Office processes. Gorham expressed her dismay at the lack of meaningful response from Sudbury Police in her own letter delivered directly to Chief Pederson dated February 28, 2019.

In her letter, Gorham referenced a conversation with Detective Constable Williams after 30 to 40 customer complaint calls had been made to the officer earlier that day. "He was smoking mad," she told *Canadian Contractor*. "'There's a reason we don't solicit business,'" she recalls him saying.

Gorham's letter to Chief Pedersen goes on to say that Williams claimed he had several ongoing fraud investigations over \$1 million but couldn't get to them because his phone hadn't stopped ringing. "Who was calling?" wrote Gorham. "It was the 87-year old woman who gave \$10,000 to Eco Life Home Improvements, aka Dave Murray; it was the illiterate couple who were threatened unless they signed four copies of a blank contract

shortly before Dave Murray attended the bank with them to remortgage their house for \$115,000; a disabled veteran who had paid him \$9,000 for windows that were never received; and a mother of a newborn who had been waiting for almost a year for her \$5,000 back after it was taken with the promise of windows that have never arrived." Gorham's letter ends with the plea, "I am begging the Greater Sudbury Police to take this matter seriously."



David Murray is the owner of Eco Life Home Improvements Inc. of Sudbury, Ontario.

By now, however, it's clear that Sudbury police are fully on the case(s). Inspector Mike Chapman of the Sudbury Criminal Investigations Unit told *Canadian Contractor* that individual cases are under current investigation and that some have already been brought to the Crown for consideration. "These matters are complex in nature," Chapman explained. "Complainants have been interviewed with regards to their specific situations. We've been working with our local Crown to determine which matters we can proceed with and which ones we cannot. We have a number of cases that are currently with the Crown. We are waiting for a response."

In the meantime, Chapman said that a number of newer cases have come to his unit's attention as well. "One of the things we are waiting from the Crown is whether people should seek some other remedy through, for example the Consumer Protection Act," he continued. "We will be getting back to all the complainants once we get a determination from the Crown."

Local MPP refers complainants to Ministry

France G  linas, MPP for the riding of Nickel Belt, has become directly involved as well, after several customers approached her office. "People came to us and shared their stories about work that they had signed to be done, and wasn't done," G  linas told *Canadian Contractor*. "We listened to their stories, realized this was something covered under the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, and we guided them through the process."

G  linas said that nine customers provided all their documentation to her office and agreed to have their stories taken directly to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, Bill Walker. G  linas has met with Walker twice since March 20. "I don't give people false hope," she explained "How far can the Ministry go and where will it lead, I don't know yet."



France G  linas, the MPP for Nickel Belt, has assisted numerous Eco Life customers navigate the Consumer Protection Office complaint process

While aware of the disappointment that has been expressed concerning the reaction of the Sudbury Police Financial Crimes Unit, G  linas said there was little she could do. "They are of course an independent player, completely separate from politicians," she said. Nevertheless, Inspector Chapman acknowledged G  linas' involvement. "She provided us with more complaints, some of which we didn't have, so we will be following up on those as well."

The cumulative effect of various customer actions, plus G  linas' involvement, may already have had some impact. In addition to the ongoing Police investigation, *Canadian Contractor* has learned that Ontario's Consumer Protection Office intends to send at least one investigator to Sudbury by the end of April to interview aggrieved customers of Eco Life and Murray.

Read Part One: How things got to this stage

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UPDATE: Police arrest and charge Eco Life's David Murray

Controversial Sudbury, ON contractor is charged with theft and trafficking of stolen property

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April 25, 2019 by John Bleasby

Canadian Contractor has learned that David Murray, owner of Sudbury, ON contracting company Eco Life Home Improvements Inc. was arrested and charged with theft under \$5000 and trafficking of stolen property, by the Greater Sudbury Police Services (GSPS) on Tuesday, April 23 at 4:30pm. Murray was released on his own recognisance and is scheduled to appear in court on May 29, 2019. According to Kaitlyn Dunn of the GSPS, the charges, "are in relation to the fact that while storing another person's property and equipment [David Murray] did end up selling it without permission." Dunn confirmed that the property and equipment was sold in North Bay.

Sub-trades' tools went missing

The property and equipment in question were tools allegedly owned by one of Eco Life's former sub-trades, David Beisel. Beisel told *Canadian Contractor* he had been working for Murray during the summer of 2018, but stopped in November and returned home to the Toronto area. At that time, Beisel said he was owed back pay, "maybe as much as five or six thousand dollars."

Beisel said he made several attempts to retrieve his tools starting in December, but said Murray was evasive. "At that point I knew something was going on. I heard through some of his ex-employees that the trailer where all my tools were stored was no longer at his shop. That's when I got up to Sudbury and started investigating." Beisel said the trailer with his tools inside were eventually located in January at a pawn shop in the City of North Bay, some 130 km away. He was forced to buy them back.

Police action a result of public awareness and personal letters

In a conversation with *Canadian Contractor* last week, Murray mentioned the Beisel tool situation and denied any wrong doing. The charges against him, in fact, have not been proven in court. However, at this point, Beisel is happy to see some action taken by the authorities of both North Bay and Sudbury after several months of delay. He credits public awareness initiatives — including a street demonstration



Eco Life Home Improvements owner David Murray
(photo courtesy of Matt Durnan/sudbury.com)

near Sudbury City Hall in early March and an active closed-group Facebook page of past Eco Life customers — for moving his issue “up the food chain”, plus personal letters sent to the Chiefs of Police in both cities. “I’m ecstatic,” he said. “It’s been a long process.”

As previously reported by *Canadian Contractor*, Murray and his company face several Small Claims actions, an ongoing fraud investigation by the Greater Sudbury Police Services, plus a separate investigation by non-bank lender SNAP Financial Group.

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Sudbury homeowners upset with contractor over unfinished work



Molly Frommer, Videojournalist, Sudbury
@MollyFrommerCTV

Published Friday, March 8, 2019 3:18PM EST
Last Updated Friday, March 8, 2019 4:43PM EST

Several dozen people in Greater Sudbury say they handed over thousands of dollars to a local contracting business for home improvements that weren't completed.

They say it's fraud, but police say it's more likely a civil lawsuit matter.

Because of this, a group of people rallied outside Sudbury's City Hall late Thursday afternoon trying to get their message across about local contractor Eco Life Home improvements.

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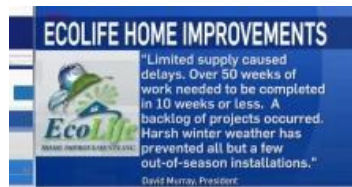
They feel they are victims of fraud and not simply a civil case after the company took their money and did not complete the work that was agreed upon.

In May of 2016, Monica Rossmann Turcotte and her husband hired Eco Life for a \$200,000 renovation on their home. Three years later, things don't look the way they had envisioned them.

"This project was originally supposed to be done by December 2016, then it was pushed to March 2017. And it was just the lack of him not showing up, us always calling him. Trying to get workers out here, it was always 'we'll be there next week.'" said Rossmann Turcotte.

The couple estimates \$140,000 worth of work has been done, and they feel they're out \$60,000.

Construction began on Monica Rossmann Turcotte's home in May 2016 and she says work is still not complete. (Molly Frommer/CTV Northern Ontario)



Statement from Eco Life Home Improvements

Another couple contracted Eco Life to have new windows installed in April of last year.

They were told they needed to make an immediate deposit of \$5,000.

"We decided to sign with him. Later that evening, we were getting harassed to get the deposit. So, we thought right away, 'red flag,' but we sent him the money by e-transfer and we waited. He told us June, July latest for install," said Angele Poulin.

She says the work was never done.

Both couples believe this is fraud, but police say fraud involves property or money lost due to lying or deceit and that the matter is more of a civil case.

Andrew Williams is a detective with Greater Sudbury Police Service.

"Civil is more broad. So, if you enter into a contract with somebody or you engage with somebody and you give them money and you don't think that you've received value for that money, you're going to have a civil case," said Williams.

Chantelle Gorham organized the rally on Thursday is speaking for some of the people that say they have been duped. She wants the police to take another look at the matters.

"Fraud is not a civil matter. When someone comes to your house and takes \$5, 10, \$20,000 and does nothing, just disappears with that, that is not a civil matter. And I'm asking them to stop writing off these calls as a civil matter," said Gorham.

When Doug Ford's government cancelled the Green ON incentive program, shortly after being elected in June of 2018, a deadline of October 31 was put in place for all work to be done.

David Murray is the president of Eco Life Home Improvements.

He says the deadline given by the government was impossible.

"Limited supply caused delays. Over 50 weeks of work needed to be completed in 10 weeks or less. A backlog of projects occurred. Harsh winter weather has prevented all but a few out-of-season installations," said Murray in a statement to CTV News.

The company president says Eco Life made an effort to guarantee as many incentives as possible, including, in some cases, rebating the costs directly.

MOST WATCHED



Birch Syrup



Devastated by flooding

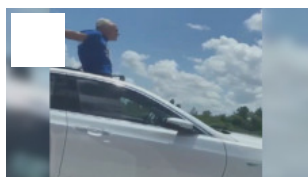


Birch syrup

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FEATURES



Protecting butterflies

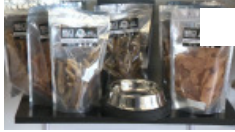
On this week's gardening segment, Tony Ryma finds out why it is important to protect butterflies and what we can do to help.



Bear in mind: lock your cars



Store owner stands ground against fire



Not your average pet food

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Grievances aired over unfinished renos



Jim Moodie The Sudbury Star

Published on: March 15, 2019 | Last Updated: March 15, 2019 4:58 AM EDT



Homeowners take part in a protest against a Sudbury contractor on March 7. *JOHN LAPPA/SUDBURY STAR*

About 30 people protested outside Tom Davies Square last week over the work of a local contractor.

There is also a Facebook group, created March 1, that now counts more than 80 members who claim to have had issues with Eco Life Home Improvements.

In most cases the complaints are about delays in jobs being completed and money paid out in down payments for work that, in some cases, is still not done.

None of the allegations against Eco Life Home Improvements has been proven in a court of law.

Angele Poulin, one of the protesters, said she hired Eco Life almost a year ago to install new windows at her home, and was told the work would be done by June or July.

"It's now March, and we still don't have windows," she said. "We got every excuse in the book. He would set an install date and just keep pushing it back."

Poulin said she provided a 50 per cent deposit of more than \$5,000. Others, she said, have put down much more up front and waited just as long, or longer, for Eco Life to complete the promised work.

In response the rally, Dave Murray, the owner of Eco Life, said he appreciates why some clients are impatient and frustrated, but insists he didn't set out to disappoint anyone, let alone rip anyone off.

"People are upset and feel cheated, so they are going to attack me," he said. "I totally understand that, but people don't realize how challenging it is to work in these conditions."

He's referring, in part, to the harsh winter Sudbury has experienced this year, which put many projects on hold, as well as labour circumstances and stipulations that make it difficult at times to have enough skilled and certified workers available for the tasks at hand.

Above all, though, Murray blames the cancellation of the provincial GreenON program, which provided rebates for energy-saving retrofits, for work piling up on him in the past year.

"It's not the cancellation that bothered me so much as the deadlines," he said. "They added deadlines, and at the start of the program we didn't have any."

Murray said he signed up for the program in early January of last year. It made business sense at the time, he said, and in a way he felt he didn't have a choice. "As a contractor, you're almost forced to join to survive," he said.

Looking back, however, he wonders if it was worth it. "To be honest I didn't know what I was getting myself into."

Getting approved as a GreenON contractor took nearly two months, he said. Meanwhile homeowners were applying in droves to take advantage of the incentive.

"It was crazy," he said. "The successful part of it was everybody was signing up, but the whole program was unorganized. People in the industry were to the point of not wanting to take on any more business because it was too much."

By June 19, when the new Ford government scrapped the program (which was to be funded by the Liberal cap and trade program, also promptly kiboshed by the Tories), Murray had “over 100 jobs sold through GreenON alone.”

A lot of those jobs were for efficient windows, which can be installed fairly quickly, but Eco Life had also taken on a bunch of siding and insulation jobs, which can take as much as six weeks, he said.

“I didn’t foresee the plan was going to get cancelled, much less having an installation deadline,” he said. “That’s what ruined everything.”

The deadline was initially set for the end of August, which caused “a panic,” he said. “We were already two months behind, because it took us that long to get certified, and when the plan was cancelled on June 19, everything went sideways. They extended the deadline to the end of October, but it still wasn’t enough time.”

Murray said his experience with a GreenON job glut isn’t unique. “The facts of this are well-documented throughout Ontario,” he said. “It’s not just a Sudbury problem. (Another contractor) was stating online that he had 1,300 jobs to do in 90-some days. It’s a mathematical impossibility.”

While Poulin would be an example of a customer who was trying to take advantage of the rebate program, not all of the people complaining about Eco Life were GreenON applicants.

Wesley and Linda Govier said they hired the company in 2016 to do a bunch of work — new windows, siding, doors and roofing — on a Lively home they acquired four years ago for their retirement.

“He never finished the roof and this year, just before winter, we hired another company to finish it,” said Linda.

“It wasn’t the quality of work as such,” said Wesley. “There were some mistakes, but people make mistakes all the time; whenever they made a mistake they came back and corrected it, except for the roof and one window that’s wrong. It’s the time it took and the fact we had to call every day just to get anything done.”

The two say they paid Eco Life more than \$100,000 and expected the work would be completed by 2017. Instead, it stretched on for another year, without a proper roof being installed. “They left roofing paper, with no shingles or nothing, on the roof for two years,” said Linda.

They would end up paying another contractor \$45,000 to complete the roofing job.

“Realistically we don’t think we’re ever going to get any compensation from Eco Life,” said Wesley. “But at least maybe we can get some satisfaction out of him not taking anyone else for a ride.”

Some unhappy clients have filed claims through Ontario Consumer Protection, including Linda Beaulieu, on behalf of her mother.

“We submitted a claim last November, which is still under investigation,” she said in a message to The Star. “Mr. Murray took advantage of my mother with the purchase and installation of windows and doors.”

Many have also contacted Greater Sudbury Police, hoping to see criminal fraud charges brought against Eco Life.

Det.-Const. Andy Williams, who works on major fraud cases with the Criminal Investigations Division, said he was not able to discuss individual companies or investigations, so could not confirm whether or not Eco Life was a focus of GSPS attention.

Generally speaking, though, he said police will treat any complaint from the public seriously and pursue an investigation if warranted.

He said it is not unheard of for a company to be charged criminally with fraud, although more often complainants are advised to pursue other routes.

“If we have allegations of contractor fraud, or any fraud for that matter, we invite them in for a statement and supporting documentation,” he said. “At that point we have to make a judgement whether it’s going to be a criminal investigation or if it’s a civil matter or if there’s another avenue available to them.”

Issues with contractors are typically civil in nature. “If you give somebody money and you didn’t get value for your money, you have a civil matter,” he said. “That being said, they can also be criminal, because if I can prove somebody took your money and they never intended to do what they told you they were going to do, and committed some kind of criminal act, then we’ve ticked the boxes.”

A contractor could be charged with fraud under \$5,000 or over \$5,000, he said, depending on how much people were put out of pocket for undelivered work, “but we have to prove there was an intent to commit fraud.”

In some cases that can be fairly easily established — “when you write someone a cheque and never see them again,” for instance — but other times it is not so obvious.

"Maybe there's a dispute and the homeowner ends up firing the contractor," he said. "Under those circumstances, well, now I have to look at it, because maybe he didn't do it in the time you wanted him to do it, but you fired him and won't let him on your property."

In many cases Williams said he directs customers who feel they have been wronged to Consumer Protection Ontario.

Unfortunately this organization does not have a Sudbury office and has "a heavy caseload," he said, as they field complaints from across Ontario. "But they work on numbers, so if 10 people complain it gets their attention. If it's more than that, they're going to send somebody up to Sudbury and launch an investigation."

Williams said if he's aware of an active investigation being carried out by Consumer Protection Ontario, and another person contacts him with a similar complaint, "I for sure tell them to go there."

That doesn't mean Sudbury police won't also continue to look at the complaints, he qualified, but "if there's an active investigation (by CPO), it's a better route. They try to work with the person to get a resolution, so they're more like a victim advocate."

The provincial watchdog isn't governed by the criminal code but can lay charges through the Consumer Protection Act. "Some of the penalties are similar to what we have, and I'm led to believe that because they're under different legislation, their burden of proof isn't as high as mine," Williams said.

An individual found guilty under the Consumer Protection Act can be fined up to \$50,000, or sentenced to up to two years less a day in prison, according to information from the province. A corporation can be fined up to \$250,000.

People can also seek justice through a civil action, Williams said. "You can always go down to small claims court and pay your fee and bring the guy to court and try to get a judgment," he said.

Murray, who has operated Eco Life since 2010 and employs about a dozen workers, said he feels like he's being "unfairly crucified" for ending up in a tough position that was largely created by the stroke of a government pen.

"No-one's complaining about the workmanship," he said. "They're complaining about the deposits and me taking forever to get the jobs done. Well, normally that wouldn't have been a problem if GreenON had given me time. But I had 50 weeks of work sold, and 10 weeks to do it in."

Running a home-reno company can be a challenge at the best of times, he said, between weather complications, workers not always being available and suppliers being slow to deliver materials, not to mention customers sometimes not paying him. Throw in a hitch from Queen's Park, and it's that much harder.

"Running a business in this trade is complicated," he said. "So the last thing we need is our government working against us."

Murray said he has always been transparent with customers, charged a fair rate, and tried to appease unhappy clients who are willing to keep working with him, often at his own expense.

"I'm a small business and we're trying to be a decent company in the community," he said. "We've got a storefront and a good team of guys, core guys with some great skills, that are honest and hardworking. If we make mistakes, give us the opportunity and we'll fix it."

He said he still counts many patient customers who appreciate the work Eco Life does, and who were not among the group of protesters on Thursday.

Murray also pointed out he would never deliberately mislead or alienate anyone, as apart from being unethical, it would only hurt his reputation and bottom line.

"We're in business to make money," he said. "And when you can't get to the other 40 jobs in time, you don't think we're not feeling it? We've had clients cancel their projects with us, and we're stuck with the product, because it's all custom-ordered."

The contractor said the abrupt nixing of the rebate program was an unfortunate twist for everyone, but he is prepared to soften the blow for homeowners who weren't able to have their retrofits completed in time.

"We're going to help the people out who didn't get the grants, out of our own pocket and out of goodwill," he said. "It's going to cost me a lot of money but I'm trying to do right by my clients."

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'They're trying to force me to close': Contractor appealing after business licence revoked

Apr 26, 2019 5:08 PM by: [Matt Durnan](#)

Updated Apr 26, 2019 5:38 PM



EcoLife Home Improvements owner Dave Murray is appealing Greater Sudbury's decision to revoke his business licence.

EcoLife Home Improvements owner Dave Murray is appealing Greater Sudbury's decision to [revoke his business licence](#).

The embattled business owner has been the focal point of a number of Sudburians who say they were bilked out of thousands of dollars for home improvement projects contracted by Murray and EcoLife that have not yet been completed.

During an [April 10 interview with Sudbury.com](#), Murray said he plans to make good on his contracts and finish the work for clients that had incomplete jobs at their homes.

That same day, Greater Sudbury revoked Murray's business licence, forbidding him from doing any work in the city, and leaving a number of clients in limbo.

"In order to operate a business in the City of Greater Sudbury, you must be in possession of a valid business license," said city spokesperson Shannon Dowling. "When somebody's business licence is revoked or suspended, they would find out when it (comes) into effect."

61 of 76

Information on the exact time of the day April 10 that Murray found out his licence was revoked was not available, so it's unclear if Murray was promising to complete outstanding work for his clients when he was no longer permitted to conduct business in the city.

When a company's business licence is revoked, the rules are clear: the business must stop operating. In Murray's case, he is not allowed to work on any jobs, even if they had been started before his licence was revoked.

In a phone interview Wednesday afternoon, Murray said he is appealing the city's decision, and said he should find out if his appeal was successful by June 5. Murray said he has asked for the process to be expedited so he can get to the jobs he has promised to complete.

The EcoLife owner has reached out to some of his clients who are waiting, but says he's hit some snares and feels there is some outside interference. He's now accusing the police of telling clients to cut off contact with him.

"The police are interfering right now," Murray said. "There's a couple of clients that I was scheduled to do installations and they were on my side and now they're not on my side any more."



One of the clients contacted by Murray reached out to Sudbury.com, but wished to remain anonymous to avoid any further interaction with Murray.

The client says they were in contact with non-bank lender [SNAP Financial, who cut ties with Murray and EcoLife in November 2018](#). The client said that SNAP Financial advised that they cease communication with Murray.

"I had been contacting Dave every month asking where my windows were," said the EcoLife client who is still awaiting the completion of a window installation that was contracted last summer.

"He's reaching out to people now offering to do their jobs, saying he's got guys that can do the work for him."

Under city bylaws, despite having his business licence revoked, Murray is allowed to reach out to other contractors to complete jobs. Murray may not solicit business or take payments for the jobs that are completed.

"On the surface, you can't do the business or solicit the work, I would take the opinion that he has the best intentions of trying to get the work done, but I'm making the assumption that he's not doing so for free," said Brendan Adair, manager of security and bylaw at the city of Greater Sudbury.

"If he's subcontracting, there's going to be some kind of fee involved and just the fact that he's calling (a client) would be viewed as soliciting work."

By definition, Murray would be described as a "building renovator" with respect to his business licence, which includes any person in the business of altering, repairing, or renovating structures and includes any person who solicits for such work, or in any way advertises or holds themselves out to the public for doing building renovations.

In other words, Murray is not allowed to contact clients directly to arrange for work to be completed, nor is he allowed to advertise himself as a building renovator while he is without a valid business licence.

"I would say in general terms if someone was doing that, it could be in violation of the bylaw," said Adair.

The appeal process for business owners whose licenses have been revoked is, in essence, a less formal court proceeding. Attending the hearing will be a municipal bylaw enforcement officer, the applicant (Murray), witnesses, and any other individuals who have a legitimate interest in the proceedings.

Appeals are made to the hearing committee, which may ask questions of the participants in order to clarify the evidence given during the appeal process.

Murray said Wednesday he is hoping to have his hearing date bumped up, and says that while he can understand the city has a duty to protect citizens, he feels the decision to revoke his business licence may be doing more harm than good.

"Some of the clients want to advocate for me against the city, to let me please finish the jobs, and the city won't let me do that," said Murray. "I understand that (the city) is trying to help protect the people,

but they're also hurting the ones that are not complaining, the ones that want to get their jobs done, and the clients I've had over the last 10 years. I can't even do service calls."

Murray pointed to a particular client that reached out to him about a roofing job that had been done by his company a number of years ago, and the roof had become leaky. Due to the fact that he has no business license, Murray can't take a service call to assess and fix the leaky roof.

"It seems like they're trying to force me to close down," said Murray. "I'm doing everything possible, there might be other avenues I can take by hiring other companies to finish the jobs for us, that's been brought to the table. I want to do right by my clients, but it feels like there's barriers they're putting up against me."

Murray approached the city to question who had issued the complaints that led to his licence being revoked, but the city turned him away and would not provide any names.

"I went through Freedom of Information, and they were going to block it, so I can't even address my accusers or try to make it right with them," said Murray.

"To me, if a client has a complaint with something that's valid, they would want to rectify it. Given that opportunity I would do that, but I feel like I'm not getting that opportunity."

In truth, Murray does have the opportunity to make good with clients whose work has not been completed, but without a business licence it must be done within the confines of the bylaw, which means he can't contact his clients directly to solicit work, or accept payment in a direct manner.

But it appears he can approach other contractors to finish jobs, as long as it's that contractor who is contacting Murray's clients and accepting the payments.

In the case of the client who spoke with Sudbury.com, they would just as soon have no further dealings with Murray, and is leaning on the support of others who are in the same boat.

"I would encourage anyone who feels the way I do to reach out for support, I know what they're feeling," said the EcoLife client.

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Happy



Amused



Afraid



Don't Care



Sad



Frustrated



Angry

Comments (15)



About the Author: Matt Durnan

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EcoLife owner charged for theft and trafficking stolen property

Apr 26, 2019 5:19 PM by: [Matt Durnan](#)

Updated Apr 26, 2019 5:23 PM



Greater Sudbury Police arrested and charged EcoLife Home Improvements owner Dave Murray on April 23. (File)

Greater Sudbury Police arrested and charged EcoLife Home Improvements owner Dave Murray on April 23.

Murray has been embroiled in a slew of criticism dating back to early March, as frustrated EcoLife clients banded together to speak out about thousands of dollars worth of contracted jobs that had not been completed.

The criminal charges levied against Murray on Tuesday were not in relation to any of his clients however, as GSPS spokesperson Kaitlyn Dunn confirmed that Murray was charged with theft under \$5,000 and trafficking stolen property.

The property in question allegedly belonged to David Beisel, a former sub-contractor who worked for Murray.



According to Beisel's mother, her son had been storing some of his tools in one of Murray's trailers back in December of 2018. In January, 2019, Murray allegedly drove the trailer full of Beisel's tools to North Bay and pawned the trailer — and its contents.

David Beisel and his mother made the trip from southern Ontario to Sudbury to meet up with Murray in January, before travelling to North Bay to retrieve the tools. It cost Beisel \$860 to buy his tools back from the hock shop as he needed them for work.

"It was either we buy them back right then or wait for a police investigation and a court case, which could have taken up to a year," said Beisel's mother, Marj Beisel, in an interview with Sudbury.com.

The fallout from this led to some frustration for the Beisels, as Marj says they were passed back and forth between North Bay and Greater Sudbury, dealing with police services in both cities.

"This matter should have been dealt with by Sudbury Police initially instead of us being told (by GSPS) to contact North Bay Police because that's where the tools were hocked," said David Beisel.

"We had to drive to North Bay a second time to initialize this complaint. Cst. Udeschini in North Bay said she would try to solve the matter by having Dave Murray pay back the \$860 and avoid a criminal charge. He agreed to that, but never sent any money. Every time she contacted him, he said he would be sending the money shortly."

More than three months after Beisel had bought back his tools, Murray was charged with theft under \$5,000 and trafficking stolen property.

In an interview with [Canadian Contractor](#), Beisel said he's ecstatic that his matter has been dealt with.

"It's been a long process," he said.

Murray is scheduled to appear in court in Sudbury to answer to the charges on May 29.

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About the Author: Matt Durnan

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Protesters say something must be done about local home improvement company

Mar 13, 2019 3:00 PM by: [Matt Durnan](#)

Updated Apr 11, 2019 2:45 PM



More than a dozen Sudburians gathered at the corner of Paris and Brady streets March 7 to protest a Sudbury home improvement company they say has left numerous Sudbury residents out thousands of dollars. (Matt Durnan/Sudbury.com)

More than a dozen Sudburians gathered at the corner of Paris and Brady streets March 7 to protest a Sudbury home improvement company they say has left numerous Sudbury residents out thousands of dollars.

The focus of the protesters' anger is David Murray, the owner of a local contracting company, EcoLife Home Improvements Inc. Protesters told stories of being bilked and bullied when they dealt with the company, sharing stories of how much money they lost, about paying for a job on their homes that was never completed.

When asked by Sudbury.com to comment on the accusations, Murray issued a statement, blaming the Ford government's cancellation of the GreenON program as the main reason that a lot of work

69 of 76

hasn't been completed.

"This isn't just a Sudbury problem, it's an Ontario problem," he said when reached by phone.

The full text of Murray's statement is at the end of the article. In his statement, Murray did not address any of the specific allegations being made by protestors, and no criminal charges have been laid against Murray or EcoLife at this time.

Angele Poulin, who helped organize the event and create a [Facebook group](#) for victims, said she shelled out a \$5,200 deposit in April 2018 to have new windows installed in her home in Wahnapiatae, under an agreement with Murray.

The window installation being offered by EcoLife was part of the Ontario Government's GreenON program, which offered rebates to consumers who installed high-efficiency windows, insulation, and other home improvements.

"We gave [Murray] a deposit for the GreenON program to have windows installed," Poulin said. "It's a great program and you can get about \$500 back per window, so we thought it was an awesome idea.

"The deposit was for \$5,200 and we were told we'd have our windows by June or July at the latest – and we still don't have our windows. There was a cutoff date of Oct. 31 to have your windows installed to have the government grant."

Similar stories emerge

Poulin's story is not unique among those who attended Thursday's protest, as similar stories of customers being pressured to quickly hand over cheques or large sums of cash – and not seeing any work completed – were common.

One man, who did not wish to be named, was protesting on behalf of his 77-year-old mother who he said is out \$20,000 after she paid for multiple jobs done on the exterior of her house.

"I don't want to give my name because she's still on the hook for this money and that work has to get done," said the man, who said EcoLife did complete a previous job installing new patio doors at his mother's house, but used that as leverage to get more money.

"She paid for the first job and it got finished, but then she was told they can do her windows, eaves, soffit, a bunch of other stuff, and it was going to cost \$20,000."

None of the work was ever completed, the man said.

Poulin and fellow protest organizer, Chantelle Gorham, say they've heard similar stories from many Sudburians.



"This needs to be looked into, there are far too many [people]," said Poulin. "I thought I was going to have my windows before my baby was born, it's a year later almost and they're still not installed. We're out \$5,000 and we can recover from that, but some of these people here are on a fixed income and are out a lot more than we are."

Plenty of online complaints

Between the [Better Business Bureau website](#) and another consumer review and complaint site called [PissedConsumer.com](#), there are more than 60 comments regarding Ecolife and David Murray, going back to at least 2011. A handful of those comments were positive, but the vast majority were complaints, criticizing the quality of the work done by Ecolife as well as the company's business practices.

While Murray points to the termination of the GreenON program as the problem, Chantelle Gorham says Murray has been employing similar business practices under different company names for at least five years, long before the GreenON program was under threat of cancellation.

Enough is enough, said Gorham, who says she got involved when a friend was "victimized." She told Sudbury.com when people complain to police about Ecolife, they're told civil court is the avenue for such complaints. So she and Poulin decided the public need to know about how they say the company operates.

"I'm trying to warn the public to not give this guy money," Gorham said last week.

EcoLife naysayers have also taken issue with the company falsely presenting themselves as a member of the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce.

The company has both a front cover ad and a full page advertisement in the 2018 Sudbury yellow pages. The full page advertisement bears the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce logo, though EcoLife Home Improvements Inc. has not been a member of the chamber since 2015.

"They are not members of the chamber, they have been in the past but they are not at the moment," said Debbi Nicholson, Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce president and CEO. "I know they continue to use our logo and we have asked that they not do that, they haven't been a member since 2015."

The chamber has indicated in writing on more than two occasions that this is misrepresentation and have asked EcoLife to stop using the chamber logo.

"I understand that with the yellow pages online they've removed the logo from that ad, but with the new phone book that has just come out they have included it in that one," said Nicholson. "I know they were using it on their website as well and we've asked them to stop using it."

Nicholson explained that the chamber does not give their logo to non-members for use, but members are provided with a "proud member" logo that they're free to use on stationary, advertisements, and websites.

"Obviously when they're no longer a member there's an expectation that they don't use the logo," said Nicholson. "We do have a code of conduct for our members, and that's part of the code that we would expect them to respect and if they're no longer a member, they no longer have the opportunity to use our logo."

This is what Tony Nash says happened to him

Tony Nash says he's one of the people who fell for Murray's door-to-door sales tactics, and he has the documentation tracking his ongoing experience to prove it. He said both he and his neighbour signed on in 2018 to have their windows done by EcoLife, again hoping to capitalize on the GreenON program.

A contract was signed by Nash in June of 2018, with an agreement in place that the work would be completed by August or September of that year. Nash says that Murray put the pressure on and employed some pushy sales techniques to get the deal done.

After some issues with a back-dated cheque, and months of waiting, which Nash admits should have been a bigger red flag, he said his neighbour's windows were done by Ecolife, but not him. He was reassured he was next, but still nothing happened.

Finally, Nash had enough and he went to Murray's office on Notre Dame Avenue to serve him papers that he was taking him to small claims court.

"[Dave] ran out in front of me and blocked the door, and when I tried to leave he bumped me in the chest," said Nash. "I told him I wasn't fighting him and left. He came outside after me and was yelling and swearing at me."

At Thursday's demonstration, Nash said he was heartbroken to hear stories from so many elderly people who were out tens of thousands of dollars.

"My heart just goes out to these people," Nash said, tearing up. "This has to stop."

Nash said he wants to pursue criminal charges against Murray for fraud. He is also in contact with Nickel Belt MPP France G  linas to look into whether Murray may have defrauded the GreenON program.

Police investigating complaints against EcoLife

Greater Sudbury Police are currently investigating a number of complaints from Sudburians about EcoLife, but the grounds on which police can lay criminal fraud charges aren't as black and white as many believe it is.

Detective Sgt. Chantal St. Martin of the GSPS Criminal Investigations fraud unit explained that there isn't one definitive dividing line that separates criminal fraud from cases that are dealt with in civil court, and that fraud is something that is very much dealt with on a case by case basis.

"It's a very fine line between the civil and criminal element and there has to be a lot of factors in play and each case has to be assessed on its own merit," said St. Martin. "When it comes to criminal [fraud] we have to distinguish that there has been a deprivation and a dishonesty that have come into play. There has to be some kind of knowledge from the person committing the offense that they are committing an offense."

There are instances, according to St. Martin, where it can be hard for people to understand why their cases don't fall under the Criminal Code and frustration can mount among those who have fallen victim to dishonest business practices.

"I think that's part of what has happened here in some situations," said St. Martin. "Even though it was explained by detective (Andy) Williams, sometimes it doesn't reach home. It's tough because it's a case by case basis, it's hard to even give examples because every situation is different."

March is Fraud Prevention Month, and Sudburians can review [Ontario's Consumer Protection Act](#) online. Contractors have to follow a set of rules that are outlined in the act, including things like how much money can be taken as a deposit, as well as start and end times for jobs.

Charges laid under the Consumer Protection Act are made by the Ministry of Consumer Services, but these fall into the civil side of things, and don't qualify as criminal fraud.

"They have a lot lower threshold than the police do for when they can lay charges. We have to do it beyond a reasonable doubt, where they may only need other certain factors like hearsay, and they don't tend to enter into investigations unless there's a lot of people complaining about a certain company," said St. Martin.

"Our cases have to stand alone in the sense that yes we can look at them as a picture to help us make our decision to lay charges, but on the other hand every case is going to be looked at individually when it hits court and it has to be able to stand up on its own two feet. Our burden of proof is much higher."

Murray's full statement is as follows:

EcoLife Home Improvements Inc. is a Sudbury-based small business, focused on delivering premium, high efficiency, home retrofits. We are proud of our work and our responsibility to our customers and our community.

In the spring of 2018 EcoLife Home Improvements, and many other home improvement companies had the opportunity to participate in the Ontario Government's GreenON program. The program rebated consumers for high-efficiency windows, insulation, and other home improvements.

The program created major market demand, a rush on limited supplies, and limited human resources impacted businesses like ours across the province. Shortly after the program began, the newly elected Conservative government terminated it and set dramatically unrealistic deadlines for completing projects.

That decision put massive pressure on already stretched businesses including EcoLife Home Improvements. Limited supply caused delays. Over 50 weeks of work needed to be completed in 10 weeks or less. The expectations created by the program were compounded by its cancellation.

It was impossible for any business, particularly a small business, to plan for such circumstances. A backlog of projects occurred. Harsh winter weather has prevented all but a few out-of-season installations.

In an effort to ensure customers received their full incentive, EcoLife Home Improvements made an effort to guarantee as many incentives as possible including in some cases rebating the costs directly.

How did this story make you feel?

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Happy



Amused



Afraid



Don't Care



Sad



Frustrated



Angry

Comments (20)



About the Author: Matt Durnan

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ONTARIO BAILIFF &
LIEN REGISTRATION CORP



OUR BAILIFF'S IN THIS BEHALF:

(or their appointee)

RE-ENTER the premises of EcoLife Home Improvements Inc./David Murray, the tenant of the building they dwell in or upon the premises in their possession situated:
848/850 Notre Dame Avenue
Sudbury, ON

For the sum of \$15,742.00 being the amount of rent arrears due on the same on the 1st day of April and for so doing this shall be your sufficient warrant and authority.

WE HEREBY AGREE to protect and indemnify the Bailiff against any and all claims for damages and costs which may be made against you by reason of your acts under this authority.

AS WITNESS our hand and seal at Garson, this 24th day of April, 2019

THE LANDLORD has re-entered and taken possession of these premises for non-payment of rent. Re-entry into these premises must be by permission from the landlord or his agent. Any person or person attempting to re-enter into these premises without the consent or permission of the landlord or his agent will be charged according to the law.

Landlord