

It's called mixed use... grain dust and luxury condos

Chris Cooke - February 2026

We've seen this movie before.

And while Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley likes to believe he and his colleagues on Sarnia City Council weren't responsible for the closure of the INEOS Styrolution styrene monomer plant two years ago, everything points in that direction.

As a result, their support of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation against the plant led to its eventual closure and the loss of 80 permanent and 100 contractor jobs.

Bradley denies that and told the Rotary Club of Sarnia Bluewaterland last month that council support of Aamjiwnaang had nothing to do with environmental issues at the plant and a federal crack down that led to its closure.

At the time, MP Marilyn Gladu disagreed suggesting the mayor and council should have known what would happen when they turned an environmental issue over to then federal Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault, whom she described as "a convicted felon with an extremist green agenda."

Guilbeault, who recently resigned from the cabinet of Mark Carney over the prime minister's sudden interest in pipelines, was known for his activism and was arrested and charged more than two decades ago for scaling Toronto's CN Tower with a banner denouncing hydrocarbon.

Gladu, a chemical engineer and former chair of the Canadian Society of Chemical Engineers suggests the mayor and council put the company in a "no win situation" against an activist environment minister. Let me suggest here that while Bradley "didn't think it had to be this way" the company which was responsible for 180 full and part-time jobs disagreed.

Which brings me to Cargill Incorporated and its nearly 100-year-old grain terminal at the end of Exmouth Street.

I sense that the nearly \$200 billion company that employs 50 at the terminal and supports hundreds in local agriculture and is viewed as being "vital" doesn't want anything to do with this mayor and this council.

It is filing a provincial application with the minister of municipal affairs that would essentially prevent London-based Tricar Developments from building a high-rise within 300 metres of the terminal.

Bradley claims he was blindsided by Cargill's decision to override the city's land use planning rules and go directly to the province.

I'm not sure why.

He apparently believes grain dust and luxury waterfront condominiums can co-exist.

But MPP Bob Bailey disagrees, noting 35 per cent of all grain in Southwestern Ontario goes through Cargill's waterfront silos. And he suggests Cargill "looked at all its options and believed it didn't have a chance with this city and this council."

Bailey says the company has a "great case to make for food safety and security and for local farmers." And he describes any suggestion that the silos can be torn down and moved elsewhere as "simply unrealistic."

The wise bet goes to Cargill on this one.

Fifty jobs at the grain terminal, hundreds if not thousands in local agriculture jobs against the backdrop of an anti-business council with a socialist agenda.

The mayor can feel blindsided all he wants but it appears the company has seen this movie before and didn't like the ending.

I could be wrong about this but I'm usually not.