

Simcoe-Grey MPP Jim Wilson to step down in 2022

After more than 30 years of service to Simcoe-Grey, MPP Jim Wilson won't be seeking re-election in 2022.

During his tenure, Wilson served as Ontario's Minister of Health, Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, Minister of the Environment and Minister of Northern Development and Mines. His final cabinet position was Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade under Premier Doug Ford.

"It has been my privilege and pleasure to have represented the riding for more than 30 years. I am grateful for the support shown [to] me since I was first elected in 1990, and returned to the legislature with healthy pluralities in seven subsequent General Elections," said Wilson.

"In that time, our region has experienced significant growth, and I have done my best in government, in opposition and independently to ensure that the province delivered the services and infrastructure our families, businesses and communities need to succeed and prosper into the future."

In the coming months, Wilson pledges to fight in the Legislature for his constituents to advance the redevelopment of Stevenson Memorial Hospital, improve health care options for seniors and create fair access to drugs and services needed by vulnerable citizens, particularly youth with Cystic Fibrosis.

"I will continue to advocate on behalf of the businesses that employ our residents and contribute to our community's prosperity. As always, the well-being of individuals and families will guide my actions," said Wilson.

New Tecumseth Mayor Rick Milne was the Mayor of Alliston in 1990 when Wilson first got elected as the Simcoe-Grey MPP and they've worked together ever since.

"He's been a strong Member for us and has done a lot of good things for the community," said Milne. "I'm sad to see him go, we got to know each other quite well over the years."

"He was actually more of a friend than your Member of [Provincial] Parliament, it didn't matter who you were or where you were, he always made time to talk to you."

Some of the projects Wilson accomplished during his tenure were twinning Highway 89 just east of Alliston, and keeping Stevenson Memorial Hospital open, lobbying for its redevelopment and improving the social services sector, Milne noted.

Simcoe County Warden George Cornell has worked with Wilson since getting elected two years ago and said he appreciates all of the support he's provided to the County during that time.

"I really want to congratulate Jim on 30 years of community service, working on behalf of the residents in his riding is a real commitment and I know he was very much appreciated by the residents in the riding," Cornell said.

"He certainly had seen a lot of a change, a lot of growth, a lot of development throughout the riding and has been very supportive and was able to work with that and adapt."

Cornell said Jim was fair, a great listener and would always take the concerns of his constituents to heart.

"He took feedback from his residents very seriously and made a point of following through whether it was with various ministries, at the province and with neighbouring communities or the County of Simcoe," he explained.

Wilson said he's hopeful about his future and wants to keep up his involvement in the riding beyond his position as MPP.

"I do not know what is in store for me personally in the years to come. Be assured that I will always have the best interests of Simcoe-Grey in mind and will continue to contribute in any way that I can," he said.

The Progressive Conservative Riding Association will now establish a Candidate Search Committee to begin reviewing potential candidates for Simcoe-Grey in the next provincial election.

"I just wish Jim all the luck, he's served his community well. He will be missed," said Milne. "Whoever falls into his position will have big shoes to fill."

By Sam Odrowski Local Journalism Initiative Reporter