

TEXADA FOREVER - GARBAGE NEVER

"It's the biggest turnout I've seen. I guess all the island's here," said long-time Texada resident Joe Christensen.

On November 9, 1982, hundreds of Texadans - from a 6-day old newborn to 94-year old Bill Young - surrounded a bus carrying a Vancouver delegation as it inched toward the Texada Legion hall. Businesses had allowed their employees time off to attend the afternoon rally. Parents brought their children from school.

All were united in demonstrating opposition to the Genstar Company's plan to fill the former BC Cement quarry in Blubber Bay with one-quarter million tons of Vancouver's garbage yearly. Chants of "Texada Forever, Garbage Never" and "Keep Your Garbage" greeted Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) representatives as they approached the meeting area.

Genstar had proposed a quick-fix solution to Greater Vancouver's growing garbage problem - dump it on Texada. The GVRD reps were here to assess the situation. They got an earful.

Once news of Genstar's plan was revealed in September 1982, Texada citizens sprang into action. A public meeting resulted in the formation of Texada Action Now (TAN) committee to fight the proposal. Support was readily garnered from all the local (and Powell River) organizations and businesses as well as from other BC regional governments.



Welcoming committee greets visiting GVRD officials on Texada Island

Door-to-door canvassers spread out across Texada and Powell River collecting thousands of signatures on a petition. Media were contacted and the issue was kept in the provincial spotlight. Backing for the campaign was tremendous. "I've never seen such a show of support on an issue," said MLA Don Lockstead.

Thanks to the island's united citizenry and the skilful leadership by TAN, the GVRD finally voted down Genstar's proposal 40 to 27 (January 1983).

TAN spokesperson Chuck Childress commented: "We didn't hit anybody over the head, we didn't blow anything up. We used responsible citizenship and we maintained our credibility throughout."

Islanders were not about to be bribed by the swimming pool and golf course offered by Genstar. As the Powell River News editorialized: "The island ... showed a spirit and unity of purpose that many communities would have trouble duplicating."