

Protesters decry effects of Canada–Mexico superhighway

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By Cailin McGough

News–Post Staff

About 25 members of Potomac Earth First! held a noisy protest outside Michael Baker Jr. Inc. offices at 4 College Ave. in Frederick on Tuesday afternoon. The group is protesting a new section of I–69 in Indiana, which the Michael Baker Jr. Inc. is helping to build.

ON THE WEB

— To learn more about the I–69 project in Indiana, visit www.i69indyevn.org or <http://stopi69.wordpress.com>.

About 25 people demonstrated in front of the Frederick offices of Michael Baker Jr. Inc. on Tuesday in hopes of bringing attention to the company's role in construction of the I–69 "superhighway" from Canada to Mexico.

The design and engineering firm, which has 50 offices in the U.S. and overseas, will build a segment of the highway from Bloomington, Ind. to Indianapolis.

Dylan Petrohilos, 18, who helped organize the event, said the demonstration showed solidarity with two activists in Indiana who began "tree sits" May 20 -- refusing to leave trees near the planned construction as a protest.

Participants included local members of Potomac Earth First!, which Petrohilos described as dedicated to a "no–compromise attitude" in defense of the earth.

Goals of the demonstration were to discourage businesses from working with Michael Baker Jr. Inc. and to send a message to management, Petrohilos said.

"I'm hoping the (employees) will tell their higher-ups that people are angry about them being involved with I-69," he said.

After walking from Baker Park, the group demonstrated peacefully for about 20 minutes outside the offices of Michael Baker Jr. Inc. on College Avenue.

Behind a Potomac Earth First! banner, the demonstrators yelled "I-69: Shut it down. Michael Baker out of our town," and "Your money, your fault."

Kathleen Harris came from Martinsburg to participate. She has traveled to Indiana, where she said farmland and old growth forests will be destroyed for the project. She is also concerned about the number of people being displaced because of the project.

"Michael Baker, 190,000 acres of trees in Indiana are going to be turned into pavement because of you," she yelled outside the office Tuesday.

Susan Derse came to watch the demonstration after hearing noise outside her home near Baker Park. She said she wasn't aware of the I-69 project but was glad to see the protest.

"They're young and that's what's really encouraging," she said. "They're not apathetic."

Contacted by phone, officials at both the local office and the corporate headquarters of Michael Baker Jr. Inc. declined to comment on the demonstration.

see the original story at: [Frederick News Post](#)