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Sudbury homeowners upset with contractor over unfinished work



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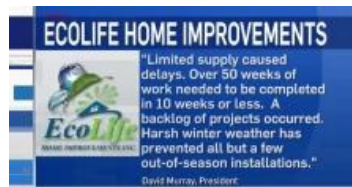
They feel they are victims of fraud and not simply a civil case after the company took their money and did not complete the work that was agreed upon.

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.

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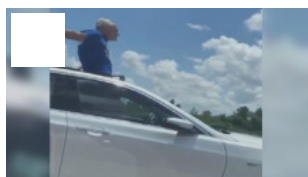


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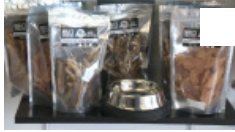
On this week's gardening segment, Tony Ryma finds out why it is important to protect butterflies and what we can do to help.



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