

# Big battle against the Big Macs: French island opposes McDonald's

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A worker shows the McBaguette, the French 'baguette' sold by US fast food giant McDonald's in their French outlets on April 10, 2012 at a McDonald's restaurant in Paris. Photo by: Eric Piermont/AFP/Getty Images

Île d'Oléron is an island in France. It is very popular with tourists.

McDonald's wants to build a restaurant there.

Many of the locals do not like that idea. They do not want a McDonald's on their island.

They are hoping to make their island more environmentally friendly. They say McDonald's does not have those goals.

## Mayor's Fight Against McDonald's

Grégory Gendre is mayor of the small town Dolus-d'Oléron, on the island. In 2014, Gendre refused permission for McDonald's to build a restaurant.

The two sides have fought in court since then. This month, a decision will be made.

McDonald's is quite successful in France. It serves 2 million meals a day.

Gendre was elected four years ago. Before that, he worked for environmental groups. He aimed to turn Dolus into a model for sustainable living. Sustainability refers to the balance between humans and nature. It is needed for both to survive. People must weigh their own needs against nature's.

## **Island Focuses On Healthy Living**

Gendre wants the island to produce fresh food locally. He also hopes to reduce waste. Waste is what ends up in landfills. It is harmful to the Earth.

McDonald's represents an old-fashioned way of life, he said. He suggested a McDonald's drive-through would just encourage more unnecessary cars. This would also worsen global warming.

The world is heating up. Scientists say it is because of fossil fuels people use. Cars burn fossil fuels for energy. Burning the fuels creates greenhouse gases. The gases become trapped in the air above. They store heat, making the world hotter.

Gendre said the Île d'Oléron would suffer greatly from rising sea levels. It could flood. "If we want to survive as an island, we have to do things differently," he said.

"Oléron is a beautiful place, it's important to protect it," said another island resident, Nicolas.

The planned McDonald's would be built far from the island's vineyards and beaches. The mayor says the restaurant would increase traffic problems. He said it could also cause more accidents.

Emilie Mariot has a sheep farm on the island. She is fighting against McDonald's coming there. She said she wants to look back on the old ways of living. She wants to focus on how people lived on and used the island before.

## **Not Everyone Is Against The Burger Chain**

One restaurant owner on the island was worried. He said smaller restaurants could close if McDonald's arrived. People could lose jobs, he said.

Not everyone is against McDonald's coming.

Jean-Michel Arnaud works at a bowling alley. "You can't stop people eating what they choose," he said. McDonald's might bring jobs, he said.

McDonald's has not commented publicly on the matter.

Quiz

- 1 Read the section "Not Everyone Is Against The Burger Chain."  
Which sentence explains why some people want a McDonald's on Île d'Oléron?
  - (A) One restaurant owner on the island was worried.
  - (B) He said smaller restaurants could close if McDonald's arrived.
  - (C) Not everyone is against McDonald's coming.
  - (D) McDonald's might bring jobs, he said.
  
- 2 Read the section "Island Focuses On Healthy Living."  
Which paragraph explains what causes global warming?
  - (A) Gendre wants the island to produce fresh food locally. He also hopes to reduce waste. Waste is what ends up in landfills. It is harmful to the Earth.
  - (B) McDonald's represents an old-fashioned way of life, he said. He suggested a McDonald's drive-through would just encourage more unnecessary cars. This would also worsen global warming.
  - (C) The world is heating up. Scientists say it is because of fossil fuels people use. Cars burn fossil fuels for energy. Burning the fuels creates greenhouse gases. The gases become trapped in the air above. They store heat, making the world hotter.
  - (D) Gendre said the Île d'Oléron would suffer greatly from rising sea levels. It could flood. "If we want to survive as an island, we have to do things differently," he said.
  
- 3 Why are many locals on Île d'Oléron against having a McDonald's on the island?
  - (A) They think there are too many McDonald's restaurants in France.
  - (B) They believe their local restaurants are better than McDonald's.
  - (C) They think McDonald's makes enough money already.
  - (D) They believe McDonald's is not environmentally friendly.

4 Read the section "Island Focuses On Healthy Living."

Why is Emilie Mariot fighting against McDonald's coming to the island?

- (A) She is worried that the extra traffic will scare her sheep.
- (B) She wants life on the island to be like it was in the past.
- (C) She is worried that she will lose her job on the farm.
- (D) She wants to make sure she is able to keep her land.