

Answers needed before site chosen

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One of the ongoing concerns about the whole energy-from-waste process has always been the lack of information about what's involved rather than where a facility would go.

That was at the heart of a motion passed by a 4-3 vote at Clarington council on Monday. All four local councillors defeated their three regional colleagues on a vote that asks for a delay in any site selection until a number of other studies have been concluded.

Those studies would outline what technology would be used and would investigate site specific human health and ecological risk assessments based on elements like technology and waste composition.

Seems eminently sensible and Clarington's local council quartet is backed up in its request by similar motions passed by Oshawa's Strategic Initiatives Committee, Ajax council and the Region of Durham's Health and Social Services committee.

These various elected bodies are clearly listening to the large number of citizens who have raised question after question about the entire incineration process.

The fear for many is that the decision to build an incinerator in Courtice is signed, sealed and delivered. But there is a growing belief that such a process has it all backwards.

Shouldn't we have all the questions about the safety, efficiency and economic viability of such a huge project answered before a site is chosen

If incineration is the best of all options available for the disposal of the region's waste, let's have that knowledge in hand before we decide exactly where that facility will be built. That's a paramount issue for those watching this issue closely.

There are also worries about the quality and quantity of Durham's diversion programs and how aggressive they are. While some strides have been made at improving blue and green bin diversion, Durham still has far to go to reach ambitious targets that would see the vast majority of waste diverted from landfill.

Residents would like to see a clear commitment to finding the best and most green solutions to a problem that isn't going away and that must be solved in the foreseeable future. In the end, an incinerator in Clarington may be the best choice but Durham and York regional councils need all the answers about what it involves before they can decide where a facility would go.