

## **Incineration offers best long-term garbage solution**

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It's been an issue which has galvanized public opinion throughout Durham Region for the past few years.

The decision about what to do with our non-recyclable trash once the option of trucking it to Michigan ends in 2010 has become one of the most important choices we must make for our collective future.

Many have argued we should aim for blue boxing or green binning all of our garbage -- the so-called zero-waste option. While it's a nice dream, it's unlikely over the short term we can possibly hit that utopian target.

There are also arguments we should search out landfill options beyond our region's borders. Even assuming we can find another Ontario locale that would take our garbage, we are really just moving the problem, not solving it.

That leaves us with the realistic alternative of building an energy-from-waste facility in Clarington where we can send all of our non-recyclables for the foreseeable future.

The business case to build the incinerator, at a cost of \$198 million, was recently presented to regional councillors and suggests that, over the long term, incineration may be a cheaper option than out-of-the-region landfill.

Such a made-in-Durham solution would use federal gas-tax revenues -- which have recently been guaranteed by the feds -- to construct the facility. An energy-from-waste facility would eliminate the need to pay heavy landfill fees, not to mention the ever-increasing gasoline costs we would incur to ship the garbage hundreds of kilometres away.

No solution to eliminating our garbage will ever satisfy everybody. It's a dirty problem, one we created ourselves and one which we must solve ourselves.

Provided that the energy-from-waste process passes all the remaining hurdles it faces on the way to approval, we believe it offers the best solution to the long-term problem of getting rid of our non-recyclables. We encourage the Region to do everything it can to increase the amount of blue box and green bin material we divert from incineration.

And because the incineration process requires trash to keep it viable, it's necessary to make sure any other municipalities searching for garbage solutions in the future pay Durham a premium if they choose to use our facility. Since we're putting up the lion's share of the money, Durham deserves to get paid if others want to use our facility.