

Don't penalize us for diverting waste: politician

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Penalizing the region for not producing enough material for a proposed York-Durham incinerator will discourage you from diverting waste, a Markham councillor told regional politicians. "By making a commitment for 50,000 tonnes of waste a year, we'll be kissing diversion goodbye," Erin Shapero told members of the region's solid waste management committee yesterday.

A "put or pay" clause in the contract for the proposed \$250 million facility means the region will pay fines if a minimum amount of garbage isn't produced for the facility to burn into energy.

With Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill using green box programs for organic waste and the northern six municipalities starting programs in September, the region will be diverting more and, she argued, eliminating the need for an incinerator.

She believes with Markham already at a 70-per-cent diversion rate and set to reach 80 per cent in 2008, the rest of the region will soon be at 70 or more, as well.

"As Markham goes, the rest of the region goes," she said.

The committee de-layed the decision for the "put or pay" clause to gather more information.

"How much capacity do we need and how much do we want to pay for?" waste management director Andy Campbell said.

In her deputation, Councillor Shapero also pointed out the traditional method of funding regional projects, based on population, means Markham would be paying the most for the incinerator, even though it has the highest diversion rate and, therefore, burning the least amount of garbage.

"There is something seriously wrong with that," she said.

She believes the region should focus on the 125 million tonnes of landfill capacity identified in Ontario.