

## **Plastic bag ban would put Durham in lead**

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You can't get away from the environmental awareness wave that is sweeping across the world and seems to have found a ready and willing audience in Canada. In this province, and especially in Durham Region, going green has been all the rage over the past year. Consider all the initiatives that have been launched in an effort to cut down on waste and greenhouse gases.

The Region has come fully on line with composting and waste diversion and has already passed the vaunted 50 per cent of waste diverted from landfill goal.

Additionally, the Province has announced plans to develop more energy from nuclear sources, a move that would help to shut down the coal-fired Nanticoke plants and would likely mean as many as four more reactors at the Darlington plant.

We'll also be getting energy saving light bulbs several years from now provincewide and we're looking to further cut waste to landfill sites by building an incinerator, likely in Clarington.

Another piece in the puzzle is an intriguing idea pushed by Regional Chairman Roger Anderson that could see the use of plastic bags in Durham stores banned as soon as January 2008.

The chairman's idea still needs to be studied and the specifics about implementation of such a ban would have to be ironed out, but the suggestion is a progressive one. It nicely dovetails too with Premier Dalton McGuinty's goal of cutting the use of plastic bags in half in Ontario by 2012.

There are already opportunities in many local grocery stores to use reusable bins or cloth bags to transport groceries home. That initiative will only be stepped up as green consciousness becomes ever more popular.

Plastic bags are an environmental nightmare as billions find their way to landfill every year and take years to break down.

Any effort that can be made to find an effective alternative can only spell good news for Durham residents as we continue to make strides to cut waste, increase diversion and make our own environmental footprint that much smaller. Bravo to the Region for trying to lead the way.

-- Metroland Durham Region Media Group