

## Delegations speak out against incineration

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By Jennifer Stone

CLARINGTON -- The Michigan border closing to trash in 2010 is an artificial deadline, and residents' apprehensions are great when it comes to potentially putting an incinerator in Clarington, the General Purpose and Administration Committee heard Monday.

About 17 delegations came forward to speak out about their concerns with Clarington potentially being home to a joint York-Durham energy from waste, or incineration facility, while only one resident spoke out in favour of incineration as a way to deal with trash left over after diversion.

The opportunity to speak on the matter arose after staff reported back to council about the need for Clarington to peer review the information that has come forward so far, before making a decision on whether it would be a willing host. The Municipality is anticipating the Region upfronting the costs of the review, though the Region has said it will only cover "reasonable" costs.

Catherine McKeever was alone amongst the delegations in her feeling staff's report was biased against Energy from Waste, and that incineration should proceed as quickly as possible.

"Rather than welcoming the state-of-the-art (facility) ... they (staff) show nothing but contempt," she said. It's a matter of staff's "NIMBYism," she said.

"Forget about our children and grandchildren," she said. "Let's worry about ourselves, now ... I look forward to the day when all our dumps will be mined and turned to ash."

But the majority of delegations -- most of whom were not listed on the agenda, having, according to the Clerk's department, missed the Wednesday noon deadline for printing -- spoke out in favour of staff's report, with the vast majority indicating Clarington should say 'No' to being a willing host for an incinerator.

The Michigan border closing to Ontario's waste in 2010 has been put forward as a deadline to have the incinerator in place, but there are other options, said some.

"You appear to have been duped into thinking incineration is our only option and that is not true," said Jim Richards.

An incinerator would be a "gaping monster that needs to be fed," and people might be less likely to work toward greater diversion of waste, said Dave Renaud, the Canadian Auto Workers' Environmental representative.

"You might have a good recycling program set up... but citizens may believe this is an easier way to get rid of trash.

"Each and every citizen of Durham Region has to be responsible for the trash they produce."

Better to move toward much greater diversion and have manufacturers take a role at ensuring less residual waste is produced, he said.

The process by which incineration was chosen as Durham and York's preferred option for getting rid of residual waste was "backwards," stated a number of delegations.

Newcastle resident Wendy Bracken said she met with a regional councillor last week who told her he was "trying to get as informed as possible" about incineration.

"Yet this is after a decision to go with Energy from Waste," she said. "The process is backwards."

Ms. Bracken, whose father and sister also spoke out on the issue, said she was concerned about emissions, as well as by potential toxicity of ash left after the incineration process.

Building an incinerator is nothing more than allowing a dump to go forward in the municipality, she said.

"Welcome to Clarington, will say our sign. Live, work and play in the dump," said Ms. Bracken.

Each delegation received the same question from Mayor Jim Abernethy, who said he was conducting a "poll": are you for or

against landfill? Several said they felt that was an over-simplification.

"Mayor Abernethy," admonished Linda Gasser, "I am terribly surprised that you would ask such an overly simplified question to such a complex issue... you have not been listening to the delegations."

Many delegations spoke of being in favour of "stabilized landfill," with truly maximized diversion and a goal of zero residual waste.

"When you burn something, it doesn't just disappear. It just gets transported somewhere else to cause problems," said Dr. Debra Jefferson, a Newcastle-based family physician who pointed to studies in reputable medical journals that showed increased mercury levels in those who live close to incinerators. As well, she said there are two cancers that are "particularly associated" with incineration: non-Hodgkins Lymphoma and soft-tissue sarcoma.

"The proponents of incineration need to show us that they are not increasing the harmful effects on human health," said Dr. Jefferson.

The committee voted to go ahead with bringing in a number of consultants to peer review the work done so far by Durham and York. A final vote on the matter will take place at Monday's meeting of Clarington council.