

# Residents continue to fight incineration

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By Erin Hatfield

DURHAM -- After three years of attending public meetings and investigating energy from waste (EFW), Catherine McKeever says she decided in favour of the technology.

"Quite frankly, I resent all these people who couldn't have bothered coming out month after month and now saying there was no public consultation," said the Clarington resident. "How NIMBY of them; they don't want anyone else's garbage, but they believe someone else wants theirs."

She applauded a partnership between York and Durham regions to find a homegrown way of managing the garbage left over after reuse and recycling and said she looks forward to the day it opens.

Ms. McKeever was one of nearly a dozen delegations that turned out at the May 30 Regional Council meeting to voice their opinion on incineration. However, she was the lone supporter of the controversial technology of burning garbage. Others urged the Region to either adopt a zero waste policy or a stabilized landfill.

The roster of opposition cited environmental, economic and most often health concerns with the technology. Residents, most of whom have appeared at a number of council and committee meetings at both the Region and Clarington, say EFW facilities are unsafe, uneconomical and unproven.

"There's a lot more things to be worried about than dioxins," Ms. McKeever said. "But no one can say dioxins cause cancer, because dioxins have always been. It is like saying air creates disease."

The all-day debate centered on a motion asking council to allot \$200,000 for Clarington to do an independent peer review of the investigation into EFW.

"How can you consider putting a limit on our councillors doing their due diligence," said Orono resident Jim Richards.

Five sites have been identified by consultants as possible locations for an EFW facility. Four are in Clarington and one in East Gwillimbury, whose council recently passed a motion indicating they will not be a willing host.

The project schedule would have a site selected and the \$250-million facility up and operating by 2010, before Michigan, where Durham's trash is currently shipped, closes its borders to Ontario trash.

Erin Shapero, a Markham town councillor, told Durham councillors she refutes the claim that there is a Michigan border crisis at hand.

"We have 125-million-tonne capacity in Ontario landfill," she said. "We can use stabilized landfill until we can get all we can out of that residual stream. The crisis is that we create too much garbage."

She said the debate shouldn't be over whether or not incineration is safe but if it's smart.

Council voted to allot the \$200,000 as a starting point for Clarington studies, but also instructed staff to identify what additional studies need to be done and how much they might cost, in co-operation with Clarington municipal staff, .

However, Clarington council, which slighted Regional Chairman Roger Anderson by denying his request to speak at a meeting on May 28, has already identified \$500,000 in studies it wishes to do.

"I don't know what you expect to accomplish at the Clarington level unless there is a change of heart there," Clarington Councillor Mary Novak said.

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