

Toronto Sun

Project recycles trash gas

Instead of putting it into air, pipes power 1,500 homes

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HALTON -- Halton is not wasting time or energy -- literally.

In a new landfill gas project, Halton Region and Oakville Hydro have partnered to collect harmful landfill gas -- methane -- and use it to produce electricity.

Halton installed pipes in landfills to collect the gas to power a generator that sends electricity to the provincial grid.

"You're killing a lot of birds with one stone, first you're destroying this environmentally harmful gas, you're producing electricity with it, displacing the electricity that would have been produced by coal burning," says Alex Bystrin, president of Oakville Hydro. "It's a double positive environmental effect."

The project was officially launched a week ago and Gerrit Buitenhuis, manager of Waste Operations for Halton Region, said they've already seen some improvements. The odours that used to come from the gas have decreased and there has also been improved growth in the grass they grows over some areas of the landfill.

"Even though it's the environmentally good thing to do, from an economical point of view it makes sense as well, because we're getting money for the sale of this electricity," he said.

The project actually began six years ago and on top of creating a healthier atmosphere, it now generates enough electricity for about 1,500 houses per day.

"We have the gas there anyway, normally it's vented into the atmosphere -- methane is 21 times worse than CO₂," Buitenhuis said. "But instead of burning it and not getting anything else in return, we are now putting that gas into an engine and producing green energy -- the response was very positive."