

Metroland

Your opinion should count on incineration

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By: Metroland Durham Region Media Group

As a Clarington resident you would hope your opinion counts when it comes to an important issue in your own community.

Hearing that what you think doesn't matter should ring alarm bells.

But the message from Regional Chairman Roger Anderson at Clarington council Monday night was that an Energy From Waste facility could well be located in Clarington -- whether local residents want it or not.

"It would be nice if we could have a willing host, but it is not essential," he said. "We deem energy from waste as the ultimate waste solution."

In other words, the Region -- and York Region is also part of the plan -- doesn't care what you think about incineration. If it decides to locate the facility here, it will.

While we would agree Durham and York regions need to find a garbage solution before the Michigan border closes to our trash in 2011, it certainly doesn't appear it's looking anywhere else but EFW.

We'll give the Region credit for ramping up our blue box and green bin recycling programs, but that still does not leave us trash free. As a result, there is still refuse that needs to be disposed of and judging by Mr. Anderson's comments, it's going to be burned.

Opponents are not shouting down EFW just for the sake of hearing themselves complain. They are bringing with them concerns about the impacts an incinerator would have on their health and they have proposed alternatives such as a goal of achieving zero waste or creating a stabilized landfill until zero waste can be achieved.

But they may as well be talking to the wall because the Region has made up its mind.

Given the situation the only hope Clarington seems to have is that East Gwillimbury is selected as the preferred site for an EFW facility. But the odds of that are stacked against Clarington with two of the remaining three preferred sites being right here.

Many residents are fed up and frustrated with good reason. It's disheartening to hear your opinion only counts at election time.

-- *Metroland Durham Region Media Group*