

## Proposed Durham incinerator draws fire at public meetings

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### [CBC News](#)

The time is approaching when the regional councils of Durham and York will vote on which site to select for a proposed new incinerator — a proposal that is highly controversial.

Wendy Bracken, a local resident who turned out at a recent information session, asked the organizers, "If we have a poll and everyone said no, will you go away?"

Bracken, one of about 200 people at the meeting, said she has never made waves in the past but when she heard about the proposal to build a garbage incinerator near Highway 401 and Courtice Road, she felt she had to join the fight.

"The Ontario Medical Association has spoken about this many times. It's saying we have too many premature deaths due to air pollution and yet we're going to have a major source of those gases and particulates in an incinerator," she said.

Pushed by the looming end to their contract to ship garbage to Michigan, which runs out in 2010, the two regions turned down the idea of new landfill sites, saying it was something the public didn't want. Instead, they decided to look into pooling their resources to build an energy-from-waste incinerator to get rid of their trash.

But the idea of the incinerator didn't seem to win people over, so town hall meetings were arranged to let residents have their say.

"Public consultation has been a key component of this process since day one, and feedback from residents continues to be a vital part of the decision-making process as this project moves forward," Cliff Curtis, commissioner of works for Durham Region, said in a statement on the municipality's website.

Durham and York argue that burning residual waste — what's left over after recycling and composting — is the best option.

Roger Anderson, the Durham regional chair, said he's convinced the incinerator won't cause environmental problems. He said the region has investigated similar facilities in Europe and U.S. "They are fairly safe and environmentally safe."

A study group picked a spot just west of the Darlington nuclear plant and just south of Highway 401 as the best site for a proposed incinerator.

Even the consultants admit that if a plant is built there, it could make the pollution problem worse.

"We have the second-highest rate of asthma in the province," said Bracken. "People are already worried about air quality."

Anderson said the Durham council is waiting for a more thorough health and environmental assessment before it makes a decision on whether to go ahead.

Both regional councils will vote on the proposed site in December.