

County could bid for incinerator waste

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By Jennifer O'Meara

NORTHUMBERLAND - Northumberland County is considering taking ash from the controversial new incinerator planned for Durham Region.

"It has been discussed at a very, very, very preliminary stage," said County CAO Bill Pyatt.

Durham Region is considering building a new incinerator in Clarington and looking at Northumberland and Peterborough as places to dispose of the by-product the incinerator produces after burning the region's garbage.

Incinerator residue from municipal solid waste is considered hazardous and can release toxic metals into the environment, according to a study published in the May 2006 Journal of Environmental Engineering. The study did find that certain processes on the incinerator ash can lower the levels of toxic metals.

"You can't know how toxic it is until you know which process they'll use," said Mr. Pyatt.

Northumberland County Director of Transportation and Waste Pam Russell said a new incinerator technology that produces a glass-like substance, which traps contaminants, rather than typical ash. She said the county would not make a serious bid to take the incinerator waste until it is known what type of technology Durham plans to use.

"Any concerns about toxicity in the landfill is something we would not want to be involved in," said Ms. Russell.

If Northumberland decides to take the incinerator waste, it would be sent to the Brighton Landfill. The county would work out an agreement so Northumberland could send some of its garbage to Durham and in return, the Brighton Landfill would store the incinerator waste.

Ms. Russell said the county would hear residents' opinions and concerns before reaching an agreement with Durham.

"We want to make sure we have support," said Ms. Russell.

Jim Phillips, director of public works for Brighton, told the Northumberland News the Brighton Landfill Liaison Committee has not discussed the issue of incinerator waste yet, and likely will not until Ms. Russell brings the details of the proposal forward.

Durham and York Regions partnered to look for ways to dispose of their garbage because the U.S. border closes to Canadian garbage in 2010. According to Mr. Pyatt, Durham has selected a 12-hectare site for the new incinerator in Clarington between Courtice and Osbourne Roads, south of Hwy. 401.

Durham is now looking for expressions of interest from contractors interested in building the new incinerator. The region will review the offers based on the proposed technologies and the experience of the company, and Ms. Russell expects it will be next June before Durham has chosen the technology for the incinerator.

Then, if the county is still interested in bidding for the incinerator waste, a public process will begin in Northumberland.

“We would certainly need to have very detailed information on the type of residue that would be produced before we would go to the public to decide if we want to partner with Durham,” said Ms. Russell.