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Clarington eyed for incinerator

Durham, York politicians OK location south of 401

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By SARAH GREEN, SUN MEDIA

NEWMARKET -- A proposed \$250-million incinerator in Clarington cleared one hurdle yesterday as politicians from Durham and York regions approved a 12-hectare site as the location of choice for the controversial project.

But Durham Regional chairman Roger Anderson said yesterday's vote by a joint group from the two regions is not the final decision and the incinerator project faces many more hurdles.

"The process of picking a preferred site is not an easy one, but it's one that has to be made," Anderson said before yesterday's unanimous vote. "This is a decision in a process and the process is nowhere near being finished."

The proposed 12-hectare site, located between Courtice and Osbourne Rds., south of Hwy. 401, faces votes today from waste management committees in both Durham and York regions as well as approval by both regional councils later this month.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK

The site must still undergo an environmental risk assessment and a company to build the incinerator has not yet been chosen.

The facility will serve both regions, with Durham sending the bulk of the garbage to it.

"Our biggest concern is the safety of the facility -- the emissions that will be coming from the facility, the effects that it will have on health and the environment, not just in Clarington, but Durham," said Clarington Mayor Jim Abernethy. "Our job as council is to make an informed decision. We have not made a decision. We haven't said, 'Yes we're for it, no we're not for it.'"

Durham residents yesterday urged the group to kill the project, saying more efforts and resources should be spent on diverting garbage into recycling and composting programs, not burning it.

"The process does not have to move forward. It was stopped in Halton. They said no to an incinerator. It was stopped in Niagara," said Wendy Bracken, of Newcastle, which is part of Clarington. "It's a recipe for disaster."

Bracken said she can't understand how a proposed site can be chosen without an environmental assessment and without knowing who will build the incinerator and what technology will be used. "This is an outrage," she said.