

Garbage incinerator site in Clarington given green light

Durham Region council votes 19-7 for proposal

Thu Jan 24, 2008

WHITBY -- Durham Region council has endorsed a Clarington site, near Courtice Rd south of Hwy. 401, as the preferred location for a proposed garbage incinerator.

The 19-7 vote came at about 11 p.m. Wednesday, 13 hours after a council meeting began.

Earlier in the evening, Regional Chair Roger Anderson ruled that a recommendation from the region's own Health and Social Services Committee asking council to defer approval was out of order as it was contrary to a process already approved.

Despite a spirited challenge from Oshawa Councillor Brian Nicholson, council backed Mr. Anderson's ruling in a 17-9 vote.

The final decision on a preferred site came after a marathon meeting which included almost 9 hours of presentations from the public with the vast majority of more than 30 speakers opposed to incineration.

Councillor Nicholson was able to win three amendments to the site approval motion aimed at reducing waste and keeping close tabs on emissions. One sets a target of 70 per cent waste diversion by 2010. The other two require that any incinerator to live up to European Union emission standards and use the best emissions monitoring equipment possible.

But in the end he voted against the site approval motion as a whole, ending up on the losing side of a 17-9 decision.

After the meeting, Councilor Nicholson said he added the amendments because he knew the site selection would not be deferred.

Although local Clarington councillor Adrian Foster briefly appeared before regional council to re-affirm Clarington's own position that the site selection should be deferred, all three regional Clarington councillors voted to endorse the Clarington site.

Consultants hired by the regions of Durham and York previously recommended the Durham-owned land near Hwy. 401 and Courtice Road as the best site for the proposed facility. Though 50-50 partners in the Environmental Assessment process, York has reduced its commitment to both construction and waste to be sent to the facility.

Because of the Durham-York partnership, the decision on a preferred site is not considered final until the York vote, expected today, is held.

Once a preferred site is formally chosen, it will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment for consideration as part of an environmental assessment currently underway, and the Province of Ontario will make the final decision on whether the incinerator proposal goes ahead.