

## **Our Tax Dollars Should Not Be The First Thing To Be Incinerated!**

Of all the delegations before Regional Council Wednesday afternoon, there was one particular delegation that sealed the deal for me. A mother of four children, the two youngest diagnosed with asthma, pleading with members of Regional Council not to do anything that could further damage our air quality.

The Region of Durham, in partnership with the Region of York, is considering an Incineration Plant (technically it is called an Energy-from-Waste facility) to manage our residual waste. The proposal is to have this facility located in Courtice. Many Durham residents, including many groups and individuals are deftly opposed to the Region's incineration plans.

I am very much opposed to the incineration plan that is currently on the table. I do not support entering a partnership with a reluctant partner (York recently scaled back their commitment to the incineration proposal to only 12% of the waste needed). I also believe the incinerator plant planned for Courtice is too grandiose for our needs. Further, the economics of this facility versus shipping the waste to a landfill to a willing host in Ontario is not justifiable.

The incineration plant, even if it generates energy from the waste, will cost you significantly more dollars to manage should our waste be directed to a landfill site (roughly a couple hundred dollars more for every ton).

Another issue to consider is that having an incinerator doesn't mean eliminating the need for a landfill. In fact, the ash from incinerators can take up to 30% of the space needed to simply landfill our garbage and, may I add, that the ash is considered toxic.

I am sure my eyebrows were not the only ones to be raised, earlier this month, when a public meeting regarding the environmental assessment on the proposed Courtice site was held in Newmarket (during business hours).

Economics aside, the mother of the two asthmatic children struck a cord with me. Rather than simply jumping into incineration, we truly need to examine our options for waste management. I do not know if an incineration plant will cause any of us harm. However, burning our waste and venting it into our atmosphere cannot do us any good. We need to ask ourselves this question- are we satisfied with the current air quality, especially during the smog days of summer and will adding more toxic fumes benefit our health?

With the incineration's plumes predicted to transcend over central and north Oshawa, the unknowns were enough for me not to vote for this initiative.

The outcome of Wednesday's highly publicized meeting does not mean the incineration plant is a done deal. We are, however, moving too closely towards that goal for my comfort. As a community, we need to work together to find creative ways to reduce our waste, thereby eliminating the need for such a facility in the first place!).

Yours truly,

John Gray

Mayor