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Fight against incinerator gathering support in Durham

Fri Feb 29, 2008

Pickering supports Clarington's 'unwilling host' position

By Kristen Calis and Jennifer Stone

CLARINGTON -- Pickering's support of Clarington council's official stance that it won't willingly host Durham and York's proposed incinerator is further evidence of growing concern about the process, say Clarington and Oshawa councillors.

Pickering voted 4-2, with one councillor absent, on Monday to endorse Clarington's official stance. Earlier this year, Clarington's four local councillors outvoted its three regional representatives to state its unwillingness after concerns were raised that Clarington's voice was not being heard at the Region.

Pickering's support of Clarington's stance brings to four the number of Durham municipalities that have passed motions stating concern about the incinerator. In October, Ajax passed a motion saying it could not support an energy-from-waste facility in Clarington due to there being unanswered questions on the issue. Oshawa then passed a motion indicating it had concerns about potential health risks. Oshawa's motion also asked the regions of Durham and York not to force an incinerator on any unwilling host.

Then came Clarington's motion and, subsequently, Pickering's support of that motion.

That should send a message, said Clarington local councillor Adrian Foster.

"So, at this point, the bulk of Durham's population, as represented by local councils, does not support the incinerator," he said. "You have the representatives of the majority of residents saying they have concerns. At what point does the Region need to step back and recognize that this has to be dealt with?"

"Beyond ignoring Clarington, are they prepared to ignore the majority of Durham?"

None of the motions affect the process the two regions have undertaken, said Regional Chairman Roger Anderson, who stated surprise at Pickering's position.

"If a local council says it's an unwilling host, it's unfortunate, but the process will continue," he said. "Local council has their local issues. Regional council has the big-picture issues."

"The fact is, it's a Regional decision."

That four municipalities have passed such motions is a "pretty damning statement," said Oshawa Regional Councillor Brian Nicholson, who is opposed to incineration. The Region really ought to take it seriously, he said.

"The Region is a federation of municipalities, not a controlling level of government," Coun. Nicholson said.