

## **Air quality report too little, too late**

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By: Metroland Durham Region Media Group

There's something that doesn't sit right about the recent air quality report completed by the Region's consultants.

The report confirmed that air quality in York Region, where the energy-from-waste facility was proposed to go, is better than the site where it's now been selected to be built, right here in Clarington. Good to know.

But now that this report is out, what good does it really do? Should it not have been completed before Regional Council made its site selection decision to locate the facility at the Courtice Road site? We think so.

Getting this report now leaves even more doubt in an already skeptical public's mind that the site selection for this facility was rushed. And let's face it, if this information was available prior to Regional Council approving the site selection, would councillors have still voted as they did to locate it here?

Simply put, the air quality in our own backyard is now worse off than that of the East Gwillimbury site in York Region, and that's without an incinerator. The air quality monitoring was conducted from September to December 2007 and looked at sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide, ozone and fine particulate matter.

The maximum measurements of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide and ozone did not surpass the Ministry of Environment's limits. That can make everyone breathe a little easier.

However, the report indicates that there's not enough data to assess fine particulate levels according to the Canada-wide standard, because that requires monitoring over a three-year period. With Michigan closing its border to our garbage by 2010, it doesn't look like fine particulate levels will be properly monitored, which is a shame. Shouldn't the health and well-being of the people living in the community be the Region's top priority?

Yes, we need a solution to our garbage problem, but when the public starts hearing about reports and studies after decisions on site selection have already been made, it leaves people skeptical and worried.

As witnessed by the Region's air quality report, it appears it's putting the cart before the horse and that can make for a bumpy ride.

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*-- Clarington This Week*