

## **Energy-from-waste is a go**

*By Blake Wolfe/The Scugog Standard  
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Regional Council approved the business plan for the Durham-based energy-from-waste facility, opting for the use of federal Gas Tax funds for its construction.

Council passed the \$198 million plan with a vote of 17 to eight, amid objections from some local residents toward the potential negative health impacts of burning waste. The facility would serve both Durham and York Regions.

According to Scugog Mayor Marilyn Pearce, who serves as chair of the Region's finance committee, the decision to use the Gas Tax money for the project has "allayed" any of council's funding concerns for the project.

"That's what it was set up to do," said Mayor Pearce, referring to the Gas Tax money, "and funding the project this way utilizes those funds in a way that will benefit the whole Region."

In total, Scugog created 7,361 tons of waste in 2007, compared to the regional total of 224,007, of which 116,285 was garbage.

Although the proposed facility has met with criticism regarding its financial feasibility and environmental impact, Mayor Pearce said that she has received little in the way of feedback from local residents opposed to the project.

"There's been one resident who has been following the whole process," said Mayor Pearce, "and he's been providing us with good information regarding the business plan and the potential health concerns. As we come down to the final approval, those concerns will be looked at. There haven't been too many other comments of concern expressed to me by local residents."

That resident, Barry Bracken of Port Perry, appeared before Regional Council last Wednesday, requesting a peer review of the business case that he stated contains incorrect data and statistics.

"The Region keeps pushing through with this project and they've dug themselves into a hole," said Mr. Bracken, a former Durham College professor, adding that he has not seen a "level of awareness anywhere" on either the financial or health impact of the incinerator.

"They (incinerators) haven't been proven to be safe," he said, explaining that a proposal for a similar facility in Halton Region was put on hold following a peer review.

Mr. Bracken proposed that instead of the energy-from-waste facility, he would prefer to see the Region pursue an "aggressive diversion policy." Although the Region has recently stated it will aim for a diversion rate of 70 per cent by 2009, Mr. Bracken is concerned that such a policy would not be compatible with an incinerator, which constantly requires waste material to burn.

"We wouldn't be able to fill it," he said. "We would have to import garbage."

"The next step will be the requests for proposals from the five vendors who have made it this far," said Mayor Pearce. "We'll probably see it back at (Regional) council toward the end of the year or early in 2009."