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Resident points out incinerator dangers

By Blake Wolfe/The Scugog Standard

Adoption of a zero-waste strategy is the preferred waste management option of a local opponent to the Region's proposed energy-from-waste facility, who deemed such a policy as "no longer pie-in-the-sky."

Port Perry resident Barry Bracken appeared in front of Scugog Council this week accompanied by his daughter Wendy Bracken, informing councillors and the public on the potential dangers and negative impacts of a trash incinerator to both health and the environment in Durham Region, should the proposed facility be constructed in Clarington. "With every step of the way, I've become convinced that an incinerator is neither safe nor sensible," said Mr. Bracken, citing such factors as the toxic by-products of incineration released into the environment and the continued need for landfill space to contain them, as well as the possible need for imported trash to fuel the facility, if the Region sticks to its target of 70 per cent waste diversion (bolstered through recycling and the Green Bin program) by 2010. "Energy from waste is a waste of energy. We only have one planet here, folks."

Mr. Bracken made a similar presentation to Regional Council earlier this month, when the business case for the energy-from-waste facility was approved. The project, estimated at \$198 million is expected to return to Regional Council later this year or in early 2009. According to Mr. Bracken, the facility would also partially service York Region, by taking on 30,000 tons of trash annually from the neighbouring region.

"At a time when smog days, illness and mortality due to air pollution are on the rise, we should not be considering a waste alternative which will add to the problem," said Ms. Bracken, following her father's presentation to council. Ms. Bracken, focusing on the negative health impacts of incineration, cited facts such as Durham Region already having the second-highest asthma rate in Ontario.

Responding to questions from councillors regarding his vision for Durham's waste management plan, Mr. Bracken expressed his desire to see residents adopt a 'zero-waste' policy, and while admitting that he is "not a fan" of landfills, stated he would prefer to see a facility similar to the sustainable Otter Lake landfill in Halifax, Nova Scotia (where non-recyclable waste is treated and contained in enclosed 'cells,' reducing its environmental impact), before Durham goes ahead with incineration.

"We might never get there (to absolutely no waste), but we could get close - a lot closer than we are now," said Mr. Bracken.

<http://www.thescugogstandard.ca/news/2008/June-08/june27-08/incineratordanger-265.html>