

The Oshawa Express

Waste facility vendor named

By Katie Strachan
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The Energy From Waste (EFW) facility is one step closer to becoming reality. The Region of Durham has officially chosen the vendor for the proposed York/Durham Region EFW facility, despite numerous delegates who voiced their opinions against the facility, its location and the vendor of choice. "Incineration is not a safe route for waste disposal," says Sid Ryan, president of Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario. "It's not possible to say emission levels will be safe. The warning signs are already there." Barry Bracken told council he has done research on the company, Covanta Energy Corporation, and discovered they were facing numerous legal issues in the United States, where they operate 35 facilities. Councillor Joe Kolodzie says he too conducted research and found the company had fines against them but they have also won numerous awards in the United States for "There are two sides to every story," he says. The region's Finance and Administration and the Works Committees put a report forth to council recommending Covanta from a group of four pre-qualified vendors. Since approval of the vendor was given, Covanta will now create an Early Works agreement with both Durham and York regions. This is required in order to complete the necessary studies to finalize the environmental assessment.

Covanta will be responsible for creating a report that includes the full assessment of technical, environmental and financial implications to the end of a 20-year term, and the execution of the design-build-operate agreement. This report will be brought back to council by June for final approval. Covanta is proposing to be the single source, full service contractor to design, permit, build, startup, commission and operate a 140,000 tonne-per-year EFW facility for the regions of Durham and York. The EFW facility will use thermal mass burning, which means all municipal solid waste from curbside pick-up is fed into a furnace where it is combusted at about 1,000 degrees Celsius. "We cannot get rid of waste by burning it. This is against every principle," adds Ryan. After the waste is burned, only an ash residue will remain. That 'gravel-like' ash will be screened to ensure all recyclable materials are removed. The remaining materials will then be shipped to a landfill. According to region report, the process involves the production of high-pressure steam, which is fed through a turbine generator that produces electricity and/or hot water energy that can be used for district heating.

The facilities exhaust will be carefully monitored and treated so that all chemical contaminants are removed before exiting the stack, according to the regions' press release. While Covanta is the region's preferred vendor, contractual agreements are subject to satisfactory completion of an environmental assessment, which is expected to cost about \$5 million and acceptance by the Ontario Ministry of Environment. Durham and York regions have been working together since 2005 to

come up with ways to manage residual waste -- the waste left over after composting and recycling. Even with the blue box recycling, the green bin composting and the yard waste composting, it still leaves waste to be managed, according to www.durhamyorkwaste.ca. Typically, the region would haul its waste to Michigan, however that method is not sustainable over the long-term. The region is slowly working to eliminate the cross-border haulage by the end of next year. If everything goes as planned, the EFW facility, located at Hwy. 401 and Courtice Road in Clarington, would open late 2010 or early 2011 at a cost of roughly \$250 million. The facility will employ about 40 people full-time and be operational for 35 years, provided there is an upgrade performed at the 20- year mark. Wendy Bracken is concerned that there has not been enough public input on the facility. The region is hosting a public open house during the day on May 12 in Bowmanville. "A drop in session is unacceptable," says Bracken.

"There needs to be a question and answer period, a full presentation and it needs to be at a reasonable time (in the evening)."

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