

Residents of Clarington and Durham,

Guess which of the following is most critical for your survival: food, oxygen, or water? If you guessed oxygen, you're right. Oxygen, free for the taking and vital to our health, we can only last minutes without it. Yet, here we are, seriously considering adding more toxins to our already polluted oxygen supply.

Think about it. The science of incineration has come a long way since I used to scrub black soot off my grandparents' windows but even if a modern incinerator works "perfectly", it still emits pollutants. Chances are that the performance statistics are based on the "best case scenario". How many systems do you know of that work perfectly all the time? How many systems do you know of that are maintained at peak performance year after year.

Think about it. When I was a kid I had asthma. I was the "weird" kid who couldn't breathe. Today so many people have breathing problems that it's hardly even considered abnormal. Do you think the change might have something to do with the declining quality of our air?

Think about it. All the garbage from Durham and York Region will be burned in Clarington. What did you put in your garbage last week? Just imagine what might be in those thousands and thousands of plastic garbage bags. Scary isn't it. We ban cigarette smoking, but seem willing to seriously consider breathing in garbage smoke.

Think about it. Every single diesel garbage truck in Durham and York will be driving into Clarington to drop off their load. Wait, there's more: the incinerator will reduce four truckloads of garbage to approximately one truckload of ash so then diesel trucks will be used to cart the leftover ash to a dump. Yes, diesel trucks over and over again, day after day, year after year. No one even tries to pretend that DIEsel exhaust is good for our health.

Think about it. The incinerator (energy from waste facility) is to be run as a private business with government controls. Facilities like this are usually more profitable if they are run at capacity, especially if there is a reliance on the energy they produce. If Durham and York residents do an excellent job at reducing their waste, would the incinerator be shut down? Isn't it more likely they would start looking for new customers? Perhaps this is why sites along the rail corridor seem so attractive. New signs for our municipality may become appropriate:

Clarington Send Us Your Trash

Think about it. We live in a part of the world where our voice is supposed to have some clout. We can't fix all the problems, but we do have the chance to voice our opinion on this one. In a democracy, if you don't say "NO" the government assumes you agree with their choices. Do YOU agree with this one? Do you need more information? Try these searches on the internet: "energy from waste Clarington" and "incinerator problems".

Stop thinking about it. Do something about it, TODAY. Our current crazy solution of shipping everything to a dump in Michigan ends in 2010 so the pressure is on to get the incinerator solution passed. Many people and organizations have spoken up already, both for and against, but it's not enough. Your voice is needed. Tell your elected representative that you want a better solution. *Tell them you are willing to change your garbage habits to get one.* SPEAK UP!

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I know there is a better solution, let's push for it together.

Marie Nelson