

Incineration Plans Going up in Flames

John Jackson

In the spring issue of Great Lakes News, we told you of plans by five Ontario municipalities to build incinerators to burn their garbage. These plans had the support of the provincial government. In the last few months, citizens' efforts have resulted in substantial progress towards halting these plans.

In June, Halton Regional Council unanimously passed a resolution to "not be a proponent of the proposed EFW [Energy-from-waste] facility and that the EFW option not be considered for a period of five years." The Region backed down after the anticipated huge profits turned out to be false, and the Region's Medical Officer of Health stated that an incinerator would inevitably be "associated with some increase in adverse health impacts." It was of these two arguments that the citizens in the community pushed so hard for a proper assessment.

The joint plans for Niagara Region and Hamilton have also been sidetracked. At the insistence of citizen activists, Niagara Region has backed off from the proposed facility, stating that they are going to more fully explore diversion and stabilized landfill options. This leaves Hamilton without a partner, making it a financial impossibility for the city.

The one area where incineration plans are still driving ahead is the combined Durham-York Regions' plan. But here citizen opposition is rising rapidly and York Region has partially backed away from the proposal, saying that their need for disposal capacity is not as great as previously stated because of diversion potential. Durham insists that it is still proceeding but the foundation of its plan is beginning to crumble.

The fight is not over yet. We still need to keep the pressure on. For further information, contact John Jackson at jjackson@glu.org.