

*Toronto Star*

## **Letter to the editor: Calling politicians to account**

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The movement currently afoot to install a waste incinerator in Clarington is oh-so-typical of the day's political expediency. As was indicated in your story, residents are only just now being given an opportunity to ask questions about it, the full impact of increased truck traffic has yet to be properly assessed, no site-specific studies have been conducted, and the final technology to be used in the incineration process has yet to be determined.

Did Durham Region's chairman and his "panel of experts" truly believe that a demonstration of such preparedness would have been sufficient to lay the fears of residents to rest? Such a premise would be absolutely laughable were the business at hand not so serious.

What we are witnessing here is a complete lack of political accountability. The regional chairman is not elected by popular vote, and no mention has been made – either by him or his panel of experts – of the fact that a feasible solution to the garbage crisis was, indeed, submitted to the Bob Rae government years ago. This proposal involved shipping trash by rail to abandoned mine sites in northern Ontario. Not only did elected officials there actually welcome our garbage, but a major Canadian rail shipper had already drawn up a plan to handle it safely and expeditiously.

Obviously this brief footnote in history has been forgotten by citizens and officials alike, and a misbegotten alternative is now being thrust upon the residents of Durham Region. Surely this is proof positive that all parties desperately need to re-evaluate this headlong plunge into unknown waters, and that citizens must somehow instill a stronger measure of accountability in the regional chairmanship.

Edward P. Swynar