

The Scugog Standard

Letter to the Editor

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Incineration sees leadership up in smoke

Incineration is about leadership - or, in Clarington, the lack thereof. The incineration issue has drawn severe, justifiable criticism from doctors, unions, environmental groups and residents alike and should continue until council declares Clarington an unwilling host. However, as much as we have accurately discussed the health and economic concerns associated with a waste-craving machine, it is imperative that we shed light on what has been an example of how best not to lead.

The environment is the issue that humanity must confront in this century and beyond. In order to rid ourselves of the destructive path we - Canadians - have been blazing, it is imperative that all levels of government and all Canadians change our wasteful habits. Having said this, the success or failure of our environmental progression hinges on government leadership and, contrary to what we are witnessing at both the municipal and regional level, this requires mayoral and regional support.

Most recently, our non-elected Regional Chairman, Roger Anderson, was informed by Pickering Ward 1 City Councillor Jennifer O'Connell that an earlier waste diversion pilot project in her ward saw the community reach 73 per cent waste diversion. Now, instead of positively acknowledging this local accomplishment and aspiring for such permanent achievement throughout the Region, Mr. Anderson sarcastically responded, "Do you know how big the Region of Durham is?" as if to say we can't do it. This is failed leadership.

Leadership is exemplified through vision and it is not simply coincidental to note that great leaders are often described as those who occupy great vision. On the contrary, both our Mayor and Regional Chairman somehow believe that a defeatist attitude is such that will propel us - socially, economically and environmentally - forward. Again, this is failed leadership.

It is of necessity that Mr. Abernethy and Mr. Anderson approach waste management with the belief that we, the citizens and communities of Durham Region, can incrementally reduce our waste to a point where landfill is but a footnote of our overall waste reduction achievements.

As idealistic or unreasonable as this may sound today, if our leadership fails to advocate for these ends, we were defeated long before the topic of incineration was introduced.

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Scugog