

Metroland Letter to the Editor

## **Let's not build an incinerator**

Thu Jul 31, 2008

To the editor:

Durham Regional council has gone to considerable lengths to find that we can afford an incinerator, but should we have one?

The British Society for Ecological Medicine concluded in December 2005 that because of the medical risks, no further incinerators should be built.

Incinerators produce a range of poisonous chemicals that include dioxins. These exist in particles so small that they pass right through our lungs into our bloodstreams. They are known causes of birth defects, leukemia, cancers and heart disease and cannot be destroyed by further incineration.

Those in favour of incineration talk a lot about monitoring dioxin levels as if low levels remove all risk, but they do not:

- 1) Amounts leaving by the chimney can only be reduced by leaving more in the ash which is dumped into landfills where it remains a toxic hazard for at least 100 years.
- 2) Although less dioxins released into the air is certainly safer than more, the truth is that even the smallest amount will cause some of the medical problems mentioned. It is also difficult to get consistent and reliable readings.

True monitoring will involve checking birth certificates (for abnormalities) and death certificates and will become a provincial matter.

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