

Globe and Mail

Hamilton considers burning sewage sludge

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HAMILTON — Hamilton city staff say they will ask council for approval to build a \$60 million incinerator to burn sewage sludge.

Public works employees say burning the sludge would be cheaper and more environmentally-friendly than trucking it to area farms to be spread as fertilizer.

That's what the city has done since their old incinerator was shut down in 1996.

Jim Harnum, senior director of water and wastewater, says the sludge is contaminated by the heavy metal selenium, which is restricted to a certain amount in soil under a new provincial act.

The city now generates more than a thousand truckloads of sludge a year, an amount expected to increase as sewage treatment improves and population grows.

Mr. Harnum says by taking trucks off the road, greenhouse gas emissions will be cut by 90 per cent, but burning sludge will add to emissions contributing to smog and acid rain.